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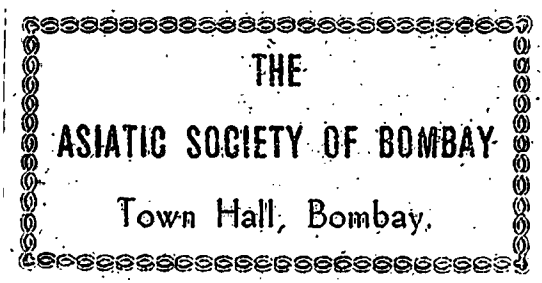

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DISSERTATIONS

AND

DISCUSSIONS

POLITICAL, PHILOSOPHICAL, AND HISTORICAL

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DISSERTATIONS, &c.

M. DE TOCQUEVILLE

ON

DEMOCRACY IN AMERICA.*

IT has been the rare fortune of M. de Tocqueville's book to have achieved an easy triumph, both over the indifference of our at once busy and indolent public to profound speculation, and over the particular obstacles which oppose the reception of speculations from a foreign, and above all from a French source. There is some ground for the remark often made upon us by foreigners, that the character of our national intellect is insular. The general movement of the European mind sweeps past us without our being drawn into it, or even looking sufficiently at it to discover in what direction it is tending; and if we had not a tolerably rapid original movement of our own, we should long since have been left in the distance. The French language is almost universally cultivated on this side of the Channel; a flood of human beings perpetually ebbs and flows between London and Paris; national prejudices and animosities are becoming numbered among the things that were; yet the revo-

* *Edinburgh Review*, October 1840.

lution which has taken place in the tendencies of French thought, which has changed the character of the higher literature of France, and almost that of the French language, seems hitherto, as far as the English public are concerned, to have taken place in vain. At a time when the prevailing tone of French speculation is one of exaggerated reaction against the doctrines of the eighteenth century, French philosophy, with us, is still synonymous with Encyclopedism. The Englishmen may almost be numbered who are aware that France has produced any great names in prose literature since Voltaire and Rousseau; and while modern history has been receiving a new aspect from the labours of men who are not only among the profoundest thinkers, but the clearest and most popular writers of their age, even those of their works which are expressly dedicated to the history of our own country, remain mostly untranslated, and in almost all cases unread.

To this general neglect M. de Tocqueville's book forms, however, as we have already said, a brilliant exception. Its reputation was as sudden, and is as extensive, in this country as in France, and in that large part of Europe which receives its opinions from France. The progress of political dissatisfaction, and the comparisons made between the fruits of a popular constitution on one side of the Atlantic, and of a mixed government with a preponderating aristocratic element on the other, had made the working of American institutions a party question. For many years, every book of travels in America had been a party pamphlet, or had at least fallen among partisans, and been pressed into the service of one party or of the

other. When, therefore, a new book, of a grave and imposing character, on Democracy in America, made its appearance even on the other side of the British Channel, it was not likely to be overlooked, or to escape an attempt to convert it to party purposes. If ever political writer had reason to believe that he had laboured successfully to render his book incapable of such a use, M. de Tocqueville was entitled to think so. But though his theories are of an impartiality without example, and his practical conclusions lean towards Radicalism, some of his phrases are susceptible of a Tory application. One of these is 'the tyranny of the majority.' This phrase was forthwith adopted into the Conservative dialect, and trumpeted by Sir Robert Peel in his Tamworth oration, when, as booksellers' advertisements have since frequently reminded us, he 'earnestly requested the perusal' of the book by all and each of his audience. And we believe it has since been the opinion of the country gentlemen that M. de Tocqueville is one of the pillars of Conservatism, and his book a definitive demolition of America and of Democracy. The error has done more good than the truth would perhaps have done; since the result is, that the English public now know and read the first philosophical book ever written on Democracy, as it manifests itself in modern society; a book, the essential doctrines of which it is not likely that any future speculations will subvert, to whatever degree they may modify them; while its spirit, and the general mode in which it treats its subject, constitute it the beginning of a new era in the scientific study of politics.

The importance of M. de Tocqueville's speculations

is not to be estimated by the opinions which he has adopted, be these true or false. The value of his work is less in the conclusions, than in the mode of arriving at them. He has applied to the greatest question in the art and science of government, those principles and methods of philosophizing to which mankind are indebted for all the advances made by modern times in the other branches of the study of nature. It is not risking too much to affirm of these volumes, that they contain the first analytical inquiry into the influence of Democracy. For the first time, that phenomenon is treated of as something which, being a reality in nature, and no mere mathematical or metaphysical abstraction, manifests itself by innumerable properties, not by some one only; and must be looked at in many aspects before it can be made the subject even of that modest and conjectural judgment, which is alone attainable respecting a fact at once so great and so new. Its consequences are by no means to be comprehended in one single description, nor in one summary verdict of approval or condemnation. So complicated and endless are their ramifications, that he who sees furthest into them will longest hesitate before finally pronouncing whether the good or the evil of its influence, on the whole, preponderates.

M. de Tocqueville has endeavoured to ascertain and discriminate the various properties and tendencies of Democracy; the separate relations in which it stands towards the different interests of society, and the different moral and social requisites of human nature. In the investigation he has of necessity left much undone, and much which will be better done by those

who come after him, and build upon his foundations. But he has earned the double honour of being the first to make the attempt, and of having done more towards the success of it than probably will ever again be done by any one individual. His method is, as that of a philosopher on such a subject must be—a combination of deduction with induction: his evidences are, laws of human nature, on the one hand; the example of America, and France, and other modern nations, so far as applicable, on the other. His conclusions never rest on either species of evidence alone; whatever he classes as an effect of Democracy, he has both ascertained to exist in those countries in which the state of society is democratic, and has also succeeded in connecting with Democracy by deductions *à priori*, tending to show that such would naturally be its influences upon beings constituted as mankind are, and placed in a world such as we know ours to be. If this be not the true Baconian and Newtonian method applied to society and government; if any better, or even any other be possible, M. de Tocqueville would be the first to say, *candidus imperti:* if not, he is entitled to say to political theorists, whether calling themselves philosophers or practical men, *his utere mecum.*

That part of *Democracy in America* which was first published, professes to treat of the political effects of Democracy: the second is devoted to its influence on society in the widest sense; on the relations of private life, on intellect, morals, and the habits and modes of feeling which constitute national character. The last is both a newer and a more difficult subject of inquiry than the first; there

are fewer who are competent, or who will even think themselves competent, to judge M. de Tocqueville's conclusions. But, we believe, no one, in the least entitled to an opinion, will refuse to him the praise of having probed the subject to a depth which had never before been sounded; of having carried forward the controversy into a wider and a loftier region of thought; and pointed out many questions essential to the subject which had not been before attended to, —questions which he may or may not have solved, but of which, in any case, he has greatly facilitated the solution.

The comprehensiveness of M. de Tocqueville's views, and the impartiality of his feelings, have not led him into the common infirmity of those who see too many sides to a question—that of thinking them all equally important. He is able to arrive at a decided opinion. Nor has the more extensive range of considerations embraced in his Second Part, affected practically the general conclusions which resulted from his First. They may be stated as follows:— That Democracy, in the modern world, is inevitable; and that it is on the whole desirable; but desirable only under certain conditions, and those conditions capable, by human care and foresight, of being realized, but capable also of being missed. The progress and ultimate ascendancy of the democratic principle has in his eyes the character of a law of nature. He thinks it an inevitable result of the tendencies of a progressive civilization; by which expressions he by no means intends to imply either praise or censure. No human effort, no accident even, unless one which should throw back civilization itself, can avail, in his

opinion, to defeat, or even very considerably to retard, this progress. But though the fact itself appears to him removed from human control, its salutary or baneful consequences do not. Like other great powers of nature, the tendency, though it cannot be counteracted, may be guided to good. Man cannot turn back the rivers to their source; but it rests with himself whether they shall fertilize or lay waste his fields. Left to its spontaneous course, with nothing done to prepare before it that set of circumstances under which it can exist with safety, and to fight against its worse by an apt employment of its better peculiarities, the probable effects of Democracy upon human well-being, and upon whatever is best and noblest in human character, appear to M. de Tocqueville extremely formidable. But with as much of wise effort devoted to the purpose as it is not irrational to hope for, most of what is mischievous in its tendencies may, in his opinion, be corrected, and its natural capacities of good so far strengthened and made use of, as to leave no cause for regret in the old state of society, and enable the new one to be contemplated with calm contentment, if without exultation.

It is necessary to observe that by Democracy M. de Tocqueville does not in general mean any particular form of government. He can conceive a Democracy under an absolute monarch. Nay, he entertains no small dread lest in some countries it should actually appear in that form. By Democracy M. de Tocqueville understands equality of conditions; the absence of all aristocracy, whether constituted by political privileges, or by superiority in individual importance and social power. It is towards Democracy in this

sense, towards equality between man and man, that he conceives society to be irresistibly tending. Towards Democracy in the other, and more common sense, it may or may not be travelling. Equality of conditions tends naturally to produce a popular government, but not necessarily. Equality may be equal freedom or equal servitude. America is the type of the first; France, he thinks, is in danger of falling into the second. The latter country is in the condition which, of all that civilized societies are liable to, he regards with the greatest alarm—a democratic state of society without democratic institutions. For, in democratic institutions, M. de Tocqueville sees not an aggravation, but a corrective, of the most serious evils incident to a democratic state of society. No one is more opposed than he is to that species of democratic radicalism, which would admit at once to the highest of political franchises, untaught masses who have not yet been experimentally proved fit even for the lowest. But the ever-increasing intervention of the people, and of all classes of the people, in their own affairs, he regards as a cardinal maxim in the modern art of government: and he believes that the nations of civilized Europe, though not all equally advanced, are all advancing, towards a condition in which there will be no distinctions of political rights, no great or very permanent distinctions of hereditary wealth; when, as there will remain no classes nor individuals capable of making head against the government, unless all are, and are fit to be, alike citizens, all will ere long be equally slaves.

The opinion that there is this irresistible tendency to equality of conditions, is, perhaps, of all the lead-

ing doctrines of the book, that which most stands in need of confirmation to English readers. M. de Tocqueville devotes but little space to the elucidation of it. To French readers the historical retrospect upon which it rests is familiar; and facts known to every one establish its truth so far as relates to that country. But to the English public, who have less faith in irresistible tendencies, and who, while they require for every political theory an historical basis, are far less accustomed to link together the events of history in a connected chain, the proposition will hardly seem to be sufficiently made out. Our author's historical argument is, however, deserving of their attention.

'Let us recollect the situation of France seven hundred years ago, when the territory was divided amongst a small number of families, who were the owners of the soil and the rulers of the inhabitants: the right of governing descended with the family inheritance from generation to generation; force was the only means by which man could act on man; and landed property was the sole source of power.

'Soon, however, the political power of the clergy was founded, and began to extend itself: the clergy opened its ranks to all classes, to the poor and the rich, the villein and the lord; equality penetrated into the government through the church, and the being who as a serf must have vegetated in perpetual bondage, took his place as a priest in the midst of nobles, and not unfrequently above the heads of kings.

'The different relations of men became more complicated and more numerous, as society gradually became more stable and more civilized. Thence the want of civil laws was felt; and the order of legal functionaries soon rose from the obscurity of their tribunals and their dusty chambers, to appear at the court of the monarch, by the side of the feudal barons in their ermine and their mail.

'Whilst the kings were ruining themselves by their great enterprises, and the nobles exhausting their resources by private wars, the lower orders were enriching themselves by commerce. The influence of money began to be perceptible in state affairs. The transactions of business opened a new road to power, and the financier rose to a station of political influence in which he was at once flattered and despised.

'Gradually the spread of mental acquirements, and the increasing taste for literature and the arts, opened chances of success to talent; knowledge became a means of government, intelligence became a social power, and the man of letters took a part in the affairs of the state.

'The value attached to the privileges of birth decreased, in the exact proportion in which new paths were struck out to advancement. In the eleventh century nobility was beyond all price; in the thirteenth it might be purchased: it was conferred for the first time in 1270; and equality was thus introduced into the government through aristocracy itself.

'In the course of these seven hundred years, it sometimes happened that, in order to resist the authority of the crown, or to diminish the power of their rivals, the nobles granted a certain share of political rights to the people. Or, more frequently, the king permitted the inferior orders to enjoy a degree of power, with the intention of lowering the aristocracy.

'As soon as land was held on any other than a feudal tenure, and personal property began in its turn to confer influence and power, every improvement which was introduced in commerce or manufactures was a fresh element of the equality of conditions. Henceforward every new discovery, every new want which grew up, and every new desire which craved satisfaction, was a step towards the universal level. The taste for luxury, the love of war, the sway of fashion, the most superficial as well as the deepest passions of the human heart, co-operated to enrich the poor and to impoverish the rich.

'From the time when the exercise of the intellect became a source of power and of wealth, it is impossible not to con-

sider every addition to science, every fresh truth, every new idea, as a germ of power placed within the reach of the people. Poetry, eloquence, and memory, the grace of wit, the glow of imagination, the depth of thought, and all the gifts which are bestowed by Providence without respect of persons, turned to the advantage of democracy; and even when they were in the possession of its adversaries, they still served its cause by bringing into relief the natural greatness of man; its conquests spread, therefore, with those of civilization and knowledge; and literature became an arsenal, where the poorest and the weakest could always find weapons to their hand.

'In perusing the pages of our history, we shall scarcely meet with a single great event, in the lapse of seven hundred years, which has not turned to the advantage of equality.

'The Crusades, and the wars with the English, decimated the nobles and divided their possessions; the erection of corporate towns introduced an element of democratic liberty into the bosom of feudal monarchy; the invention of fire-arms equalized the villein and the noble on the field of battle; printing opened the same resources to the minds of all classes; the post was established, so as to bring the same information to the door of the poor man's cottage and to the gate of the palace; and Protestantism proclaimed that all men are alike able to find the road to heaven. The discovery of America offered a thousand new paths to fortune, and placed riches and power within the reach of the adventurous and the obscure.

'If we examine what was happening in France at intervals of fifty years, beginning with the eleventh century, we shall invariably perceive that a twofold revolution has taken place in the state of society. The noble has gone down on the social ladder, and the *roturier* has gone up; the one descends as the other rises. Every half century brings them nearer to each other.

'Nor is this phenomenon at all peculiar to France. Whithersoever we turn our eyes, we witness the same continual revolution throughout the whole of Christendom.

'Everywhere the various occurrences of national existence have turned to the advantage of democracy; all men have aided it by their exertions. Those who have intentionally laboured in its cause, and those who have served it unwittingly; those who have fought for it, and those who have declared themselves its opponents—have all been driven along in the same track, have all laboured to one end, some ignorantly and some unwillingly; all have been blind instruments in the hands of God.

'The gradual development of the equality of conditions is therefore a providential fact, and possesses all the characteristics of a Divine decree: it is universal, it is durable, it constantly eludes all human interference, and all events as well as all men contribute to its progress.

'Would it be wise to imagine that a social impulse which dates from so far back can be checked by the efforts of a generation? Is it credible that the democracy which has annihilated the feudal system, and vanquished kings, will respect the *bourgeois* and the capitalist? Will it stop now that it is grown so strong, and its adversaries so weak?

'It is not necessary that God himself should speak in order to disclose to us the unquestionable signs of his will. We can discern them in the habitual course of nature, and in the invariable tendency of events.

'The Christian nations of our age seem to me to present a most alarming spectacle. The impulse which is bearing them along is so strong that it cannot be stopped, but it is not yet so rapid that it cannot be guided. Their fate is in their hands; yet a little while, and it may be so no longer.'—(*Introduction to the First Part.*)

That such has been the actual course of events in modern history, nobody can doubt, and as truly in England as in France. Of old, every proprietor of land was sovereign over its inhabitants, while the cultivators could not call even their bodily powers their own. It was by degrees only, and in a succession of

ages, that their personal emancipation was effected, and their labour became theirs to sell for whatever they could obtain for it. They became the rich men's equals in the eye of the law; but the rich had still the making of the law, and the administering of it; and the equality was at first little more than nominal. The poor, however, could now acquire property; the path was open to them to quit their own class for a higher; their rise even to a considerable station, gradually became a common occurrence; and to those who acquired a large fortune, the other powers and privileges of aristocracy were successively opened, until hereditary honours have become less a power in themselves, than a symbol and ornament of great riches. While individuals thus continually rose from the mass, the mass itself multiplied and strengthened; the towns obtained a voice in public affairs; the many, in the aggregate, became even in property more and more a match for the few; and the nation became a power, distinct from the small number of individuals who once disposed even of the crown, and determined all public affairs at their pleasure. The Reformation was the dawn of the government of public opinion. Even at that early period, opinion was not formed by the higher classes exclusively; and while the publicity of all State transactions, the liberty of petition and public discussion, the press—and of late, above all, the periodical press—have rendered public opinion more and more the supreme power, the same causes have rendered the formation of it less and less dependent upon the initiative of the higher ranks. Even the direct participation of the people at large in the government had, in various ways, been greatly

extended, before the political events of the last few years, when democracy has given so signal a proof of its progress in society, by the inroads it has been able to make into the political constitution. And in spite of the alarm which has been taken by the possessors of large property, who are far more generally opposed than they had been within the present generation to any additional strengthening of the popular element in the House of Commons, there is at this moment a much stronger party for a further parliamentary reform, than many good observers thought there was, twelve years ago, for that which has already taken place.

But there is a surer mode of deciding the point than any historical restrospect. Let us look at the powers which are even now at work in society itself.

To a superficial glance at the condition of our own country, nothing can seem more unlike any tendency to equality of condition. The inequalities of property are apparently greater than in any former period of history. Nearly all the land is parcelled out in great estates, among comparatively few families; and it is not the large but the small properties which are in process of extinction. A hereditary and titled nobility, more potent by their vast possessions than by their social precedency, are constitutionally and really one of the great powers in the state. To form part of their order is that which every ambitious man aspires to, as the crowning glory of a successful career. The passion for equality of which M. de Tocqueville speaks almost as if it were the great moral lever of modern times, is hardly

known in this country even by name. On the contrary, all ranks seem to have a passion for inequality. The hopes of every person are directed to rising in the world, not to pulling the world down to him. The greatest enemy of the political conduct of the House of Lords, submits to their superiority of rank as he would to the ordinances of nature; and often thinks any amount of toil and watching repaid by a nod of recognition from one of their number.

We have put the case as strongly as it could be put by an adversary, and have stated as facts some things which, if they have been facts, are giving visible signs that they will not always be so. If we look back even twenty years, we shall find that the popular respect for the higher classes is by no means the thing it was; and though all who are rising wish for the continuance of advantages which they themselves hope to share, there are among those who do not expect to rise, increasing indications that a levelling spirit is abroad, and political discontents, in whatever manner originating, show an increasing tendency to take that shape. But it is the less necessary to dwell upon these things, as we shall be satisfied with making out, in respect to the tendency to equality in England, much less than M. de Tocqueville contends for. We do not maintain that the time is drawing near when there will be no distinction of classes; but we do contend that the power of the higher classes, both in government and in society, is diminishing; while that of the middle and even the lower classes is increasing, and likely to increase.

The constituent elements of political importance are property, intelligence, and the power of combination.

In every one of these elements, is it the higher classes, or the other portion of society, that have lately made and are continuing to make the most rapid advances?

Even with regard to the element of property, there cannot be room for more than a momentary doubt. The class who are rich by inheritance, are so far from augmenting their fortunes, that it is much if they can be said to keep them up. A territorial aristocracy always live up to their means—generally beyond them. Our own is no exception to the rule; and as their control over the taxes becomes every day more restricted, and the liberal professions more overcrowded, they are condemned more and more to bear the burden of their own large families; which it is not easy to do, compatibly with leaving to the heir the means of keeping up, without becoming embarrassed, the old family establishments. It is matter of notoriety how severely the difficulty of providing for younger sons is felt even in the highest rank; and that, as a provision for daughters, alliances are now courted which would not have been endured a generation ago. The additions to the 'money-power' of the higher ranks, consist of the riches of the *novi homines* who are continually aggregated to that class from among the merchants and manufacturers, and occasionally from the professions. But many of these are merely successors to the impoverished owners of the land they buy; and the fortunes of others are taken, in the way of marriage, to pay off the mortgages of older families. Even with these allowances, no doubt the number of wealthy persons is steadily on the increase; but what is this to the accumulation of capitals and growth of incomes in the hands of the

middle class? It is that class which furnishes all the accessions to the aristocracy of wealth; and for one who makes a large fortune, fifty acquire, without exceeding, a moderate competency, and leave their children to work, like themselves, at the labouring oar.

In point of intelligence, it can still less be affirmed that the higher classes maintain the same proportional ascendancy as of old. They have shared with the rest of the world in the diffusion of information. They have improved, like all other classes, in the decorous virtues. Their humane feelings and refined tastes form in general a striking contrast to the coarse habits of the same class a few generations ago. But it would be difficult to point out what new idea in speculation, what invention or discovery in the practical arts, what useful institution, or what permanently valuable book, Great Britain has owed for the last hundred years to her hereditary aristocracy, titled or untitled;*—what great public enterprise, what important national movement in religion or politics, those classes have originated, or have so much as taken in it the principal share. Considered in respect to active energies and laborious habits, to the stirring qualities which fit men for playing a considerable part in the affairs of mankind, few will say that our aristocracy have not deteriorated. It is, on the other hand, one of the commonplaces of the age, that knowledge and intelligence are spreading, in a degree which was formerly

* The chief exceptions since the accession of the House of Hanover, are the chemist Cavendish in the last century, and the Earl of Rosse in the present.

thought impossible, to the lower, and down even to the lowest rank. And this is a fact, not accomplished, but in the mere dawn of its accomplishment, and which has shown hitherto but a slight promise of its future fruits. It is easy to scoff at the kind of intelligence which is thus diffusing itself; but it is intelligence still. The knowledge which is power, is not the highest description of knowledge only: any knowledge which gives the habit of forming an opinion, and the capacity of expressing that opinion, constitutes a political power; and if combined with the capacity and habit of acting in concert, a formidable one.

It is in this last element, the power of combined action, that the progress of the Democracy has been the most gigantic. What combination can do, has been shown by an experiment, of now many years' duration, among a people the most backward in civilization (thanks to English misgovernment) between the Vistula and the Pyrenees. Even on this side of the Irish Channel we have seen something of what could be done by Political Unions, Anti-Slavery Societies, and the like; to say nothing of the less advanced, but already powerful organization of the working classes, the progress of which has been suspended only by the temporary failure arising from the manifest impracticability of its present objects. And these various associations are not the machinery of democratic combination, but the occasional weapons which that spirit forges as it needs them. The real Political Unions of England are the Newspapers. It is these which tell every person what all other persons are feeling, and in what manner they are ready to act: it is by

these that the people learn, it may truly be said, their own wishes, and through these that they declare them. The newspapers and the railroads are solving the problem of bringing the democracy of England to vote, like that of Athens, simultaneously in one *agora;* and the same agencies are rapidly effacing those local distinctions which rendered one part of our population strangers to another; and are making us more than ever (what is the first condition of a powerful public opinion) a homogeneous people. If America has been said to prove that in an extensive country a popular government may exist, England seems destined to afford the proof that after a certain stage in civilization it must; for as soon as the numerically stronger have the same advantages, in means of combination and celerity of movement, as the smaller number, they are the masters; and, except by their permission, no government can any longer exist.

It may be said, doubtless, that though the aristocratic class may be no longer in the ascendant, the power by which it is succeeded is not that of the numerical majority; that the middle class in this country is as little in danger of being outstripped by the democracy below, as of being kept down by the aristocracy above; and that there can be no difficulty for that class, aided as it would be by the rich, in making head by its property, intelligence, and power of combination, against any possible growth of those elements of importance in the inferior classes; and in excluding the mass of mere manual labourers from any share in political rights, unless such a restricted and subordinate one as may be found compatible with the complete ascendancy of property.

We are disposed partially to agree in this opinion. Universal suffrage is never likely to exist and maintain itself where the majority are *prolétaires;* and we are not unwilling to believe that a labouring class in abject poverty, like a great part of our rural population, or which expends its surplus earnings in gin or in waste, like so much of the better paid population of the towns, may be kept politically in subjection, and that the middle classes are safe from the permanent rule of such a body, though perhaps not from its Swing outrages, or Wat Tyler insurrections. But this admission leaves the fact of a tendency towards democracy practically untouched. There is a democracy short of pauper suffrage; the working classes themselves contain a middle as well as a lowest class. Not to meddle with the *vexata quæstio*, whether the lowest class is or is not improving in condition, it is certain that a larger and larger body of manual labourers are rising above that class, and acquiring at once decent wages and decent habits of conduct. A rapidly increasing multitude of our working people are becoming, in point of condition and habits, what the American working people are. And if our boasted improvements are of any worth, there must be a growing tendency in society and government to make this condition of the labouring classes the general one. The nation must be most slenderly supplied with wisdom and virtue, if it cannot do something to improve its own physical condition, to say nothing of its moral. It is something gained, that well-meaning persons of all parties now at length profess to have this end in view. But in proportion as it is approached to—in proportion as the working class

becomes, what all proclaim their desire that it should be—well paid, well taught, and well conducted; in the same proportion will the opinions of that class tell, according to its numbers, upon the affairs of the country. Whatever portion of the class succeeds in thus raising itself, becomes a part of the ruling body; and if the suffrage be necessary to make it so, it will not be long without the suffrage.

Meanwhile, we are satisfied if it be admitted, that the government of England is progressively changing from the government of a few, to the government, not indeed of *the* many, but of many;—from an aristocracy with a popular infusion, to the *régime* of the middle class. To most purposes, in the constitution of modern society, the government of a numerous middle class is democracy. Nay, it not merely *is* democracy, but the only democracy of which there is yet any example; what is called universal suffrage in America arising from the fact that America is *all* middle class; the whole people being in a condition, both as to education and pecuniary means, corresponding to the middle class here. The consequences which we would deduce from this fact will appear presently, when we examine M. de Tocqueville's view of the moral, social, and intellectual influences of democracy. This cannot be done until we have briefly stated his opinions on the purely political branch of the question. To this part of our task we shall now proceed; with as much conciseness as is permitted by the number and importance of the ideas which, holding an essential place among the grounds of his general conclusions, have a claim not to be omitted even from the most rapid summary.

We have already intimated that M. de Tocqueville recognises such a thing as a democratic state of society without a democratic government; a state in which the people are all equal, and subjected to one common master, who selects indiscriminately from all of them the instruments of his government. In this sense, as he remarks, the government of the Pasha of Egypt is a specimen of democracy; and to this type (with allowance for difference of civilization and manners) he thinks that all nations are in danger of approximating, in which the equalization of conditions has made greater progress than the spirit of liberty. Now, this he holds to be the condition of France. The kings of France have always been the greatest of levellers; Louis XI., Richelieu, Louis XIV., alike laboured to break the power of the noblesse, and reduce all intermediate classes and bodies to the general level. After them came the Revolution, bringing with it the abolition of hereditary privileges, the emigration and dispossession of half the great landed proprietors, and the subdivision of large fortunes by the revolutionary law of inheritance. While the equalization of conditions was thus rapidly reaching its extreme limits, no corresponding progress of public spirit was taking place in the people at large. No institutions capable of fostering an interest in the details of public affairs were created by the Revolution: it swept away even those which despotism had spared; and if it admitted a portion of the population to a voice in the government, gave it them only on the greatest but rarest occasion—the election of the great council of the state. A political

act, to be done only once in a few years, and for which nothing in the daily habits of the citizen has prepared him, leaves his intellect and moral dispositions very much as it found them; and the citizens not being encouraged to take upon themselves collectively that portion of the business of society which had been performed by the privileged classes, the central government easily drew to itself not only the whole local administration, but much of what, in countries like ours, is performed by associations of individuals. Whether the government was revolutionary or counter-revolutionary made no difference; under the one and the other, everything was done *for* the people, and nothing *by* the people. In France, consequently, the arbitrary power of the magistrate in detail, is almost without limit. And when of late some attempts have been made to associate a portion of the citizens in the management of local affairs, comparatively few have been found, even among those in good circumstances, (anywhere but in the large towns,) who could be induced willingly to take any part in that management; who, when they had no personal object to gain, felt the public interest sufficiently their own interest, not to grudge every moment which they withdrew from their occupations or pleasures to bestow upon it. With all the eagerness and violence of party contests in France, a nation more passive in the hands of any one who is uppermost does not exist. M. de Tocqueville has no faith in the virtues, nor even in the prolonged existence, of a superficial love of freedom, in the face of a practical habit of slavery; and the question whether the French are to be a free

people, depends, in his opinion, upon the possibility of creating a spirit and a habit of local self-government.

M. de Tocqueville sees the principal source and security of American freedom, not so much in the election of the President and Congress by popular suffrage, as in the administration of nearly all the business of society by the people themselves. This it is which, according to him, keeps up the habit of attending to the public interest, not in the gross merely, or on a few momentous occasions, but in its dry and troublesome details. This, too, it is which enlightens the people; which teaches them by experience how public affairs must be carried on. The dissemination of public business as widely as possible among the people, is, in his opinion, the only means by which they can be fitted for the exercise of any share of power over the legislature; and generally also the only means by which they can be led to desire it.

For the particulars of this education of the American people by means of political institutions, we must refer to the work itself; of which it is one of the minor recommendations, that it has never been equalled even as a mere statement and explanation of the institutions of the United States. The general principle to which M. de Tocqueville has given the sanction of his authority, merits more consideration than it has yet received from the professed labourers in the cause of national education. It has often been said, and requires to be repeated still oftener, that books and discourses alone are not education; that life is a problem, not a theorem; that action can only

be learnt in action. A child learns to write its name only by a succession of trials; and is a man to be taught to use his mind and guide his conduct by mere precept? What can be learnt in schools is important, but not all-important. The main branch of the education of human beings is their habitual employment; which must be either their individual vocation, or some matter of general concern, in which they are called to take a part. The private money-getting occupation of almost every one is more or less a mechanical routine; it brings but few of his faculties into action, while its exclusive pursuit tends to fasten his attention and interest exclusively upon himself, and upon his family as an appendage of himself; making him indifferent to the public, to the more generous objects and the nobler interests, and, in his inordinate regard for his personal comforts, selfish and cowardly. Balance these tendencies by contrary ones; give him something to do for the public, whether as a vestryman, a juryman, or an elector; and, in that degree, his ideas and feelings are taken out of this narrow circle. He becomes acquainted with more varied business, and a larger range of considerations. He is made to feel that besides the interests which separate him from his fellow-citizens, he has interests which connect him with them; that not only the common weal is his weal, but that it partly depends upon his exertions. Whatever might be the case in some other constitutions of society, the spirit of a commercial people will be, we are persuaded, essentially mean and slavish, wherever public spirit is not cultivated by an extensive participation of the people in the business of

government in detail; nor will the desideratum of a general diffusion of intelligence among either the middle or lower classes be realized, but by a corresponding dissemination of public functions and a voice in public affairs.

Nor is this inconsistent with obtaining a considerable share of the benefits (and they are great) of what is called centralization. The principle of local self-government has been undeservedly discredited, by being associated with the agitation against the new poor-law. The most active agency of a central authority in collecting and communicating information, giving advice to the local bodies, and even framing general rules for their observance, is no hindrance, but an aid, to making the local liberties an instrument of educating the people. The existence of such a central agency allows of intrusting to the people themselves, or to local bodies representative of them, many things of too great national importance to be committed unreservedly to the localities; and completes the efficacy of local self-government as a means of instruction, by accustoming the people not only to judge of particular facts, but to understand, and apply, and feel practically the value of, principles. The mode of administration provided for the English poor-laws by the late Act seems to us to be in its general conception almost theoretically perfect. And the extension of a similar mixture of central and local management to several other branches of administration, thereby combining the best fruits of popular intervention with much of the advantage of skilled supervision and traditional experience, would, we believe, be entitled to no mean rank in M. de

Tocqueville's list of correctives to the inconveniences of Democracy.

In estimating the effects of democratic government as distinguished from a democratic condition of society, M. de Tocqueville assumes the state of circumstances which exists in America—a popular government in the State, combined with popular local institutions. In such a government he sees great advantages, balanced by no inconsiderable evils.

Among the advantages, one which figures in the foremost rank is that of which we have just spoken, the diffusion of intelligence; the remarkable impulse given by democratic institutions to the active faculties of that portion of the community who in other circumstances are the most ignorant, passive, and apathetic. These are characteristics of America which strike all travellers. Activity, enterprise, and a respectable amount of information, are not the qualities of a few among the American citizens, nor even of many, but of all. There is no class of persons who are the slaves of habit and routine. Every American will carry on his manufacture, or cultivate his farm, by the newest and best methods applicable to the circumstances of the case. The poorest American understands and can explain the most intricate parts of his country's institutions; can discuss her interests, internal and foreign. Much of this may justly be attributed to the universality of easy circumstances, and to the education and habits which the first settlers in America brought with them; but our author is certainly not wrong in ascribing a certain portion of it to the perpetual exercise of the

faculties of every man among the people, through the universal practice of submitting all public questions to his judgment.

'It is incontestable that the people frequently conduct public business very ill; but it is impossible that the people should take a part in public business without extending the circle of their ideas, and without quitting the ordinary routine of their mental occupations. The humblest individual who is called upon to co-operate in the government of society, acquires a certain degree of self-respect; and, as he possesses power, minds more enlightened than his own offer him their services. He is canvassed by a multitude of claimants who need his support; and who, seeking to deceive him in a thousand different ways, instruct him during the process. He takes a part in political undertakings which did not originate in his own conception, but which give him a general taste for such undertakings. New ameliorations are daily suggested to him in the property which he holds in common with others, and this gives him the desire of improving that property which is peculiarly his own. He is, perhaps, neither happier nor better than those who came before him; but he is better informed and more active. I have no doubt that the democratic institutions of the United States, joined to the physical constitution of the country, are the cause (not the direct, as is so often asserted, but the indirect cause) of the prodigious commercial activity of the inhabitants. It is not engendered by the laws, but it proceeds from habits acquired through participation in making the laws.

'When the opponents of Democracy assert that a single individual performs the functions which he undertakes, better than the government of the people at large, it appears to me that they are perfectly right. The government of an individual, supposing an equal degree of instruction on either side, has more constancy, more perseverance, than that of a multitude; more combination in its plans, and more perfection in its details; and is better qualified judiciously to discriminate

the characters of the men it employs. If any deny this, they have never seen a democratic government, or have formed their opinion only upon a few instances. It must be conceded that even when local circumstances and the disposition of the people allow democratic institutions to subsist, they never display a regular and methodical system of government. Democratic liberty is far from accomplishing all the projects it undertakes with the skill of an intelligent despotism. It frequently abandons them before they have borne their fruits, or risks them when the consequences may prove dangerous; but in the end it produces greater results than any absolute government. It does fewer things well, but it does a greater number of things. Not what is done by a democratic government, but what is done under a democratic government by private agency, is really great. Democracy does not confer the most skilful kind of government upon the people, but it produces that which the most skilful governments are frequently unable to awaken, namely, an all-pervading and restless activity—a superabundant force—an energy which is never seen elsewhere, and which may, under favourable circumstances, beget the most amazing benefits. These are the true advantages of democracy.'—(vol. ii. chap. 6.)

The other great political advantage which our author ascribes to Democracy, requires less illustration, because it is more obvious, and has been oftener treated of; that the course of legislation and administration tends always in the direction of the interest of the greatest number. Although M. de Tocqueville is far from considering this quality of Democracy as the panacea in politics which it has sometimes been supposed to be, he expresses his sense of its importance, if in measured, in no undecided terms. America does not exhibit to us what we see in the best mixed constitutions—the class interests of small minorities wielding the powers of legislation, in opposition both

to the general interest and to the general opinion of the community; still less does she exhibit what has been characteristic of most representative governments, and is only gradually ceasing to characterize our own—a standing league of class interests—a tacit compact among the various knots of men who profit by abuses, to stand by one another in resisting reform. Nothing can subsist in America that is not recommended by arguments which, in appearance at least, address themselves to the interest of the many. However frequently, therefore, that interest may be mistaken, the direction of legislation towards it is maintained in the midst of the mistakes; and if a community is so situated or so ordered that it can 'support the transitory action of bad laws, and can await without destruction the result of the *general tendency* of the laws,' that country, in the opinion of M. de Tocqueville, will prosper more under a democratic government than under any other. But in aristocratic governments, the interest, or at best the honour and glory, of the ruling class, is considered as the public interest; and all that is most valuable to the individuals composing the subordinate classes, is apt to be immolated to that public interest with all the rigour of antique patriotism.

'The men who are intrusted with the direction of public affairs in the United States are frequently inferior, both in point of capacity and of morality, to those whom aristocratic institutions would raise to power. But their interest is identified and confounded with that of the majority of their fellow-citizens. They may frequently be faithless and frequently mistaken, but they will never systematically adopt a line of conduct hostile to the majority; and it is impossible

that they should give a dangerous or an exclusive character to the government.

'The mal-administration of a democratic magistrate is, moreover, a mere isolated fact, the effects of which do not last beyond the short period for which he is elected. Corruption and incapacity do not act as common interests which connect men permanently with one another. A corrupt or an incapable magistrate will not concert his measures with another magistrate, simply because that individual is corrupt and incapable like himself; and these two men will never unite their endeavours to promote or screen the corruption or inaptitude of their remote posterity. The ambition and the manœuvres of the one will serve, on the contrary, to unmask the other. The vices of the magistrate in democratic states are usually those of his individual character.

'But, under aristocratic governments, public men are swayed by the interest of their order, which, if it is sometimes blended with the interests of the majority, is frequently distinct from them. This interest is a common and lasting bond which unites them together. It induces them to coalesce, and combine their efforts towards attaining an end which is not always the happiness of the greatest number; and it not only connects the persons in authority with each other, but links them also to a considerable portion of the governed, since a numerous body of citizens belongs to the aristocracy, without being invested with official functions. The aristocratic magistrate, therefore, finds himself supported in his own natural tendencies by a portion of society itself, as well as by the government of which he is a member.

'The common object which connects the interest of the magistrates in aristocracies with that of a portion of their cotemporaries, identifies it also with future generations of their order. They labour for ages to come as well as for their own time. The aristocratic magistrate is thus urged towards the same point by the passions of those who surround him, by his own, and, I might almost say, by those of his posterity. Is it wonderful that he should not resist? And hence it is that

the class spirit often hurries along with it those whom it does not corrupt, and makes them unintentionally fashion society to their own particular ends, and pre-fashion it for their descendants.'—(*Ibid.*)

These, then, are the advantages ascribed by our author to a democratic government. We are now to speak of its disadvantages.

According to the opinion which is prevalent among the more cultivated advocates of democracy, one of its greatest recommendations is that by means of it the wisest and worthiest are brought to the head of affairs. The people, it is said, have the strongest interest in selecting the right men. It is presumed that they will be sensible of that interest; and, subject to more or less liability of error, will in the main succeed in placing a high, if not the highest degree of worth and talent in the highest situations.

M. de Tocqueville is of another opinion. He was forcibly struck with the general want of merit in the members of the American legislatures, and other public functionaries. He accounts for this, not solely by the people's incapacity to discriminate merit, but partly also by their indifference to it. He thinks there is little preference for men of superior intellect, little desire to obtain their services for the public; occasionally even a jealousy of them, especially if they be also rich. They, on their part, have still less inclination to seek any such employment. Public offices are little lucrative, confer little power, and offer no guarantee of permanency: almost any other career holds out better pecuniary prospects to a man of ability and enterprise; nor will instructed men stoop to those mean arts, and those compromises of

their private opinions, to which their less distinguished competitors willingly resort. The depositaries of power, after being chosen with little regard to merit, are, partly perhaps for that very reason, frequently changed. The rapid return of elections, and even a taste for variety, M. de Tocqueville thinks, on the part of electors (a taste not unnatural wherever little regard is paid to qualifications), produces a rapid succession of new men in the legislature, and in all public posts. Hence, on the one hand, great instability in the laws—every new comer desiring to do something in the short time he has before him; while, on the other hand, there is no political *carrière*—statesmanship is not a profession. There is no body of persons educated for public business, pursuing it as their occupation, and who transmit from one to another the results of their experience. There are no traditions, no science or art of public affairs. A functionary knows little, and cares less, about the principles on which his predecessor has acted; and his successor thinks as little about his. Public transactions are therefore conducted with a reasonable share indeed of the common sense and common information which are general in a democratic community, but with little benefit from specific study and experience; without consistent system, long-sighted views, or persevering pursuit of distant objects.

This is likely enough to be a true picture of the American Government, but can scarcely be said to be peculiar to it: there are now few governments remaining, whether representative or absolute, of which something of the same sort might not be said. In no country where the real government resides in the

minister, and where there are frequent changes of ministry, are far-sighted views of policy likely to be acted upon; whether the country be England or France, in the eighteenth century or in the nineteenth.* Crude and ill-considered legislation is the character of all governments whose laws are made and acts of administration performed *impromptu*, not in pursuance of a general design, but from the pressure of some present occasion; of all governments in which the ruling power is to any great extent exercised by persons not trained to government as a business. It is true that the governments which have been celebrated for their profound policy, have generally been aristocracies. But they have been very narrow aristocracies, consisting of so few members, that every member could personally participate in the business of administration. These are the governments which have a natural tendency to be administered steadily—that is, according to fixed principles. Every member of the governing body being trained to government as a profession, like other professions they respect precedent, transmit their experience from generation to generation, acquire and preserve a set of traditions, and all being competent judges of each other's merits, the ablest easily rises to his proper level. The governments of ancient Rome and modern Venice were of this character; and as all know, for ages conducted the affairs of those states with admirable constancy and skill, on fixed principles, often unworthy enough, but always eminently adapted to the ends of those governments. When the governing body,

* A few sentences are here inserted from another paper by the author.

whether it consists of the many or of a privileged class, is so numerous, that the large majority of it do not and cannot make the practice of government the main occupation of their lives, it is impossible that there should be wisdom, foresight, and caution in the governing body itself. These qualities must be found, if found at all, not in the body, but in those whom the body trust. The opinion of a numerous ruling class is as fluctuating, as liable to be wholly given up to immediate impulses, as the opinion of the people. Witness the whole course of English history. All our laws have been made on temporary impulses. In no country has the course of legislation been less directed to any steady and consistent purpose.

In so far as it is true that there is a deficiency of remarkable merit in American public men (and our author allows that there is a large number of exceptions), the fact may perhaps admit of a less discreditable explanation. America needs very little government. She has no wars, no neighbours, no complicated international relations; no old society with its thousand abuses to reform; no half-fed and untaught millions in want of food and guidance. Society in America requires little but to be let alone. The current affairs which her Government has to transact can seldom demand much more than average capacity; and it may be in the Americans a wise economy, not to pay the price of great talents when common ones will serve their purpose. We make these remarks by way of caution, not of controversy. Like many other parts of our author's doctrines, that of which we are now speaking affords work for a suc-

cession of thinkers and of accurate observers, and must in the main depend on future experience to confirm or refute it.

We now come to that one among the dangers of Democracy, respecting which so much has been said, and which our author designates as 'the despotism of the majority.'

It is perhaps the greatest defect of M. de Tocqueville's book, that from the scarcity of examples, his propositions, even when derived from observation, have the air of mere abstract speculations. He speaks of the tyranny of the majority in general phrases, but gives hardly any instances of it, nor much information as to the mode in which it is practically exemplified. The omission was in the present instance the more excusable, as the despotism complained of was, at that time, politically at least, an evil in apprehension more than in sufferance; and he was uneasy rather at the total absence of security against the tyranny of the majority, than at the frequency of its actual exertion.

Events, however, which have occurred since the publication of the first part of M. de Tocqueville's work, give indication of the shape which tyranny is most likely to assume when exercised by a majority.

It is not easy to surmise any inducements of interest, by which, in a country like America, the greater number could be led to oppress the smaller. When the majority and the minority are spoken of as conflicting interests, the rich and the poor are generally meant; but where the rich are content with being rich, and do not claim as such any political privileges,

their interest and that of the poor are generally the same: complete protection to property, and freedom in the disposal of it, are alike important to both. When, indeed, the poor are so poor that they can scarcely be worse off, respect on their part for rights of property which they cannot hope to share, is never safely to be calculated upon. But where all have property, either in enjoyment or in reasonable hope, and an appreciable chance of acquiring a large fortune; and where every man's way of life proceeds on the confident assurance that, by superior exertion, he will obtain a superior reward; the importance of inviolability of property is not likely to be lost sight of. It is not affirmed of the Americans that they make laws against the rich, or unduly press upon them in the imposition of taxes. If a labouring class, less happily circumstanced, could prematurely force themselves into influence over our own legislature, there might then be danger, not so much of violations of property, as of undue interference with contracts; unenlightened legislation for the supposed interest of the many; laws founded on mistakes in political economy. A minimum of wages, or a tax on machinery, might be attempted: as silly and as inefficacious attempts might be made to keep up wages by law, as were so long made by the British legislature to keep them down by the same means. We have no wish to see the experiment tried, but we are fully convinced that experience would correct the one error as it has corrected the other, and in the same way; namely, by complete practical failure.

It is not from the separate interests, real or imaginary, of the majority, that minorities are in danger;

but from its antipathies of religion, political party, or race: and experience in America seems to confirm what theory rendered probable, that the tyranny of the majority would not take the shape of tyrannical laws, but that of a dispensing power over all laws. The people of Massachusetts passed no law prohibiting Roman Catholic schools, or exempting Protestants from the penalties of incendiarism; they contented themselves with burning the Ursuline convent to the ground, aware that no jury would be found to redress the injury. In the same reliance the people of New York and Philadelphia sacked and destroyed the houses of the Abolitionists, and the schools and churches of their black fellow-citizens, while numbers who took no share in the outrage amused themselves with the sight. The laws of Maryland still prohibit murder and burglary; but in 1812, a Baltimore mob, after destroying the printing office of a newspaper which had opposed the war with England, broke into the prison to which the editors had been conveyed for safety, murdered one of them, left the others for dead; and the criminals were tried and acquitted. In the same city, in 1835, a riot which lasted four days, and the foolish history of which is related in M. Chevalier's Letters, was occasioned by the fraudulent bankruptcy of the Maryland Bank. It is not so much the riots, in such instances, that are deplorable; these might have occurred in any country:—it is the impossibility of obtaining aid from an executive dependent on the mob, or justice from juries which formed part of it: it is the apathetic cowardly truckling of disapproving lookers-on; almost a parallel to the passive imbecility of the people of Paris, when a

handful of hired assassins perpetrated the massacres of September. For where the majority is the sole power, and a power issuing its mandates in the form of riots, it inspires a terror which the most arbitrary monarch often fails to excite. The silent sympathy of the majority may support on the scaffold the martyr of one man's tyranny; but if we would imagine the situation of a victim of the majority itself, we must look to the annals of religious persecution for a parallel.

Yet, neither ought we to forget that even this lawless violence is not so great, because not so lasting, an evil, as tyranny through the medium of the law. A tyrannical law remains; because, so long as it is submitted to, its existence does not weaken the general authority of the laws. But in America, tyranny will seldom use the instrument of law, because there is in general no permanent class to be tyrannized over. The subjects of oppression are casual objects of popular resentment, who cannot be reached by law, but only by occasional acts of lawless power; and to tolerate these, if they ever became frequent, would be consenting to live without law. Already in the United States, the spirit of outrage has raised a spirit of resistance to outrage; of moral resistance first, as was to be wished and expected: if that fail, physical resistance will follow. The majority, like other despotic powers, will be taught by experience that it cannot enjoy both the advantages of civilized society, and the barbarian liberty of taking men's lives and property at its discretion. Let it once be generally understood that minorities will fight, and majorities will be shy of provoking them.

The bad government of which there is any permanent danger under modern civilization, is in the form of bad laws and bad tribunals: government by the *sic volo* either of a king or a mob, belongs to past ages, and can no more exist, for long together, out of the pale of Asiatic barbarism.

The despotism, therefore, of the majority within the limits of civil life, though a real evil, does not appear to us to be a formidable one. The tyranny which we fear, and which M. de Tocqueville principally dreads, is of another kind—a tyranny not over the body, but over the mind.

It is the complaint of M. de Tocqueville, as well as of other travellers in America, that in no country does there exist less independence of thought. In religion, indeed, the varieties of opinion which fortunately prevailed among those by whom the colonies were settled, have produced a toleration in law and in fact extending to the limits of Christianity. If by ill fortune there had happened to be a religion of the majority, the case would probably have been different. On every other subject, when the opinion of the majority is made up, hardly any one, it is affirmed, dares to be of any other opinion, or at least to profess it. The statements are not clear as to the nature or amount of the inconvenience that would be suffered by any one who presumed to question a received opinion. It seems certain, however, that scarcely any person has that courage; that when public opinion considers a question as settled, no further discussion of it takes place; and that not only nobody dares (what everybody may venture upon in Europe) to say anything disrespectful to the public, or derogatory

to its opinions, but that its wisdom and virtue are perpetually celebrated with the most servile adulation and sycophancy.

These considerations, which were much dwelt on in the author's First Part, are intimately connected with the views promulgated in his Second, respecting the influence of Democracy on intellect.

The Americans, according to M. de Tocqueville, not only profess, but carry into practice, on all subjects except the fundamental doctrines of Christianity and Christian ethics, the habit of mind which has been so often inculcated as the one sufficient security against mental slavery—the rejection of authority, and the assertion of the right of private judgment. They regard the traditions of the past merely in the light of materials, and as 'a useful study for doing otherwise and better.' They are not accustomed to look for guidance either to the wisdom of ancestors, or to eminent cotemporary wisdom, but require that the grounds on which they act shall be made level to their own comprehension. And, as is natural to those who govern themselves by common-sense rather than by science, their cast of mind is altogether unpedantic and practical; they go straight to the end, without favour or prejudice towards any set of means, and aim at the substance of things, with something like a contempt for form.

From such habits and ways of thinking, the consequence which would be apprehended by some would be a most licentious abuse of individual independence of thought. The fact is the reverse. It is impossible, as our author truly remarks, that mankind in general should form all their opinions for themselves: an

authority from which they mostly derive them may be rejected in theory, but it always exists in fact. That law above them, which older societies have found in the traditions of antiquity, or in the dogmas of priests or philosophers, the Americans find in the opinions of one another. All being nearly equal in circumstances, and all nearly alike in intelligence and knowledge, the only authority which commands an involuntary deference is that of numbers. The more perfectly each knows himself the equal of every single individual, the more insignificant and helpless he feels against the aggregate mass; and the more incredible it appears to him that the opinion of all the world can possibly be erroneous. 'Faith in public opinion,' says M. de Tocqueville, 'becomes in such countries a species of religion, and the majority its prophet.' The idea that the things which the multitude believe are still disputable, is no longer kept alive by dissentient voices; the right of private judgment, by being extended to the incompetent, ceases to be exercised even by the competent; and speculation becomes possible only within the limits traced, not as of old by the infallibility of Aristotle, but by that of 'our free and enlightened citizens,' or 'our free and enlightened age.'

On the influence of Democracy upon the cultivation of science and art, the opinions of M. de Tocqueville are highly worthy of attention. There are many who, partly from theoretic considerations, and partly from the marked absence in America of original efforts in literature, philosophy, or the fine arts, incline to believe that modern democracy is fatal to them, and that wherever its spirit spreads they will

take flight. M. de Tocqueville is not of this opinion. The example of America, as he observes, is not to the purpose, because America is, intellectually speaking, a province of England; a province in which the great occupation of the inhabitants is making money, because for that they have peculiar facilities, and are therefore, like the people of Manchester or Birmingham, for the most part contented to receive the higher branches of knowledge ready-made from the capital. In a democratic nation, which is also free, and generally educated, our author is far from thinking that there will be no public to relish or remunerate the works of science and genius. Although there will be great shifting of fortunes, and no hereditary body of wealthy persons sufficient to form a class, there will be, he thinks, from the general activity and the absence of artificial barriers, combined with the inequality of human intelligence, a far greater number of rich individuals (*infiniment plus nombreux*) than in an aristocratic society. There will be, therefore, though not so complete a leisure, yet a leisure extending perhaps to more persons; while from the closer contact and greater mutual intercourse between classes, the love of intellectual pleasures and occupations will spread downward very widely among those who have not the same advantages of leisure. Moreover, talents and knowledge being in a democratic society the only means of rapid improvement in fortune, they will be, in the abstract at least, by no means undervalued; whatever measure of them any person is capable of appreciating, he will also be desirous of possessing. Instead, therefore, of any neglect of science and literature, the eager ambition which is

universal in such a state of society takes that direction as well as others, and the number of those who cultivate these pursuits becomes 'immense.'

It is from this fact—from the more active competition in the products of intellect, and the more numerous public to which they are addressed—that M. de Tocqueville deduces the defects with which the products themselves will be chargeable. In the multiplication of their quantity he sees the deterioration of their quality. Distracted by so great a multitude, the public can bestow but a moment's attention on each; they will be adapted, therefore, chiefly for striking at the moment. Deliberate approval, and a duration beyond the hour, become more and more difficult of attainment. What is written for the judgment of a highly instructed few, amidst the abundance of writings may very probably never reach them; and their suffrage, which never gave riches, does not now confer even glory. But the multitude of buyers affords the possibility of great pecuniary success and momentary notoriety, for the work which is made up to please at once, and to please the many. Literature thus becomes not only a trade, but is carried on by the maxims usually adopted by other trades which live by the number, rather than by the quality, of their customers; that much pains need not be bestowed on commodities intended for the general market, and that what is saved in the workmanship may be more profitably expended in self-advertisement. There will thus be an immense mass of third and fourth-rate productions, and very few first-rate. Even the turmoil and bustle of a society in which every one is striving to get on, is in itself,

our author observes, not favourable to meditation. 'Il règne dans le sein de ces nations un petit mouvement incommode, une sorte de roulement incessant des hommes les uns sur les autres, qui trouble et distrait l'esprit sans l'animer et l'élever.' Not to mention that the universal tendency to action, and to rapid action, directs the taste to applications rather than principles, and hasty approximations to truth rather than scientific accuracy in it.

Passing now from the province of intellect to that of sentiments and morals, M. de Tocqueville is of opinion that the general softening of manners, and the remarkable growth, in modern times, of humanity and philanthropy, are in great part the effect of the gradual progress of social equality. Where the different classes of mankind are divided by impassable barriers, each may have intense sympathies with his own class, more intense than it is almost possible to have with mankind in general; but those who are far below him in condition are so unlike himself, that he hardly considers them as human beings; and if they are refractory and troublesome, will be unable to feel for them even that kindly interest which he experiences for his more unresisting domestic cattle. Our author cites a well-known passage of Madame de Sévigné's Letters, in exemplification of the want of feeling exhibited even by good sort of persons towards those with whom they have no *fellow*-feeling. In America, except towards the slaves (an exception which proves the rule,) he finds the sentiments of philanthropy and compassion almost universal, accompanied by a general kindness of manner and obligingness of disposition, without much of ceremony and

punctilio. As all feel that they are not above the possible need of the good-will and good offices of others, every one is ready to afford his own. The general equality penetrates also into the family relations: there is more intimacy, he thinks, than in Europe, between parents and children, but less, except in the earliest years, of paternal authority, and the filial respect which is founded on it. These, however, are among the topics which we must omit; as well as the connexion which our author attempts to trace between equality of conditions and strictness of domestic morals, and some other remarks on domestic society in America, which do not appear to us to be of any considerable value.

M. de Tocqueville is of opinion, that one of the tendencies of a democratic state of society is to make every one, in a manner, retire within himself, and concentrate his interests, wishes, and pursuits within his own business and household.

The members of a democratic community are like the sands of the sea-shore, each very minute, and no one adhering to any other. There are no permanent classes, and therefore no *esprit de corps;* few hereditary fortunes, and therefore few local attachments, or outward objects consecrated by family feeling. A man feels little connexion with his neighbours, little with his ancestors, little with his posterity. There are scarcely any ties to connect any two men together, except the common one of country. Now, the love of country is not, in large communities, a passion of spontaneous growth. When a man's country is his town, where his ancestors have lived for generations, of which he knows every inhabitant, and has recol-

lections associated with every street and building—in which alone, of all places on the earth, he is not a stranger—which he is perpetually called upon to defend in the field, and in whose glory or shame he has an appreciable share, made sensible by the constant presence and rivalry of foreigners; in such a state of things patriotism is easy. It was easy in the ancient republics, or in modern Switzerland. But in great communities an intense interest in public affairs is scarcely natural, except to a member of an aristocracy, who alone has so conspicuous a position, and is so personally identified with the conduct of the government, that his credit and consequence are essentially connected with the glory and power of the nation he belongs to; its glory and power (observe,) not the well-being of the bulk of its inhabitants. It is difficult for an obscure person like the citizen of a democracy, who is in no way involved in the responsibility of public affairs, and cannot hope to exercise more than the minutest influence over them, to have the sentiment of patriotism as a living and earnest feeling. There being no intermediate objects for his attachments to fix upon, they fasten themselves on his own private affairs; and, according to national character and circumstances, it becomes his ruling passion either to improve his condition in life, or to take his ease and pleasure by the means which it already affords him.

As, therefore, the state of society becomes more democratic, it is more and more necessary to nourish patriotism by artificial means; and of these none are so efficacious as free institutions—a large and frequent intervention of the citizens in the management

of public business. Nor does the love of country alone require this encouragement, but every feeling which connects men either by interest or sympathy with their neighbours and fellow-citizens. Popular institutions are the great means of rendering general in a people, and especially among the richer classes, the desire of being useful in their generation; useful to the public or to their neighbours without distinction of rank; as well as courteous and unassuming in their habitual intercourse.

'When the public is supreme, there is no man who does not feel the value of public good-will, or who does not endeavour to court it by drawing to himself the esteem and affection of those amongst whom he is to live. Many of the passions which congeal and keep asunder human hearts, are then obliged to retire, and hide below the surface. Pride must be dissembled; disdain does not break out; selfishness is afraid of itself. Under a free government, as most public offices are elective, the men whose elevated minds or aspiring hopes are too closely circumscribed in private life, constantly feel that they cannot do without the population which surrounds them. Men learn at such times to think of their fellow-men from ambitious motives, and they frequently find it, in a manner, their interest, to be forgetful of self.

'I may here be met by an objection, derived from electioneering intrigues, the meannesses of candidates, and the calumnies of their opponents. These are opportunities of animosity which occur oftener, the more frequent elections become. Such evils are, doubtless, great, but they are transient; whereas the benefits which attend them remain. The desire of being elected may lead some men for a time to mutual hostility; but this same desire leads all men, in the long run, mutually to support each other; and if it happens that an election accidentally severs two friends, the electoral system brings a multitude of citizens permanently together

who would always have remained unknown to each other. Freedom engenders private animosities, but despotism gives birth to general indifference. . . . . .

'A brilliant achievement may win for you the favour of a people at one stroke; but to earn the love and respect of the population which surrounds you, requires a long succession of little services and obscure good offices, a constant habit of kindness, and an established reputation for disinterestedness. Local freedom, then, which leads a great number of citizens to value the affections of their neighbours, and of those with whom they are in contact, perpetually draws men back to one another, in spite of the propensities which sever them; and forces them to render each other mutual assistance.

'In the United States, the more opulent citizens take great care not to stand aloof from the people: on the contrary, they constantly keep on easy terms with them; they listen to them; they speak to them every day. They know that the rich, in democracies, always stand in need of the poor; and that in democratic times a poor man's attachment depends more on manner than on benefits conferred. The very magnitude of such benefits, by setting the difference of conditions in a strong light, causes a secret irritation to those who reap advantage from them; but the charm of simplicity of manners is almost irresistible. . . . . This truth does not penetrate at once into the minds of the rich. They generally resist it as long as the democratic revolution lasts, and they do not acknowledge it immediately after that revolution is accomplished. They are very ready to do good to the people, but they still choose to keep them at arm's length; they think that is sufficient, but they are mistaken. They might spend fortunes thus, without warming the hearts of the population around them; that population does not ask them for the sacrifice of their money, but of their pride.

'It would seem as if every imagination in the United States were on the stretch to invent means of increasing the wealth and satisfying the wants of the public. The best informed inhabitants of each district are incessantly using their

information to discover new means of augmenting the general prosperity; and, when they have made any such discoveries, they eagerly surrender them to the mass of the people. . . . .

'I have often seen Americans make great and real sacrifices to the public welfare; and I have a hundred times remarked that, in case of need, they hardly ever fail to lend faithful support to each other. The free institutions which the inhabitants of the United States possess, and the political rights of which they make so much use, remind every citizen, and in a thousand ways, that he is a member of society. They at every instant impress upon his mind the notion that it is the duty as well as the interest of men to make themselves useful to their fellow-creatures; and as he sees no particular reason for disliking them, since he is never either their master or their slave, his heart readily leans to the side of kindness. Men attend to the interests of the public, first by necessity, afterwards by choice; what was calculation becomes an instinct; and, by dint of working for the good of one's fellow-citizens, the habit and the taste for serving them is at length acquired.

'Many people in France consider equality of conditions as one evil, and political freedom as a second. When they are obliged to yield to the former, they strive at least to escape from the latter. But I contend that, in order to combat the evils which equality may produce, there is only one effectual remedy—namely, political freedom.'—(vol. iii. part ii. chap. 4.)

With regard to the tone of moral sentiment characteristic of democracy, M. de Tocqueville holds an opinion which we think deserves the attention of moralists. Among a class composed of persons who have been born into a distinguished position, the habitual springs of action will be very different from those of a democratic community. Speaking generally, (and making abstraction both of individual peculiarities, and of the influence of moral culture,)

it may be said of the first, that their feelings and actions will be mainly under the influence of pride; of the latter, under that of interest. Now, as in an aristocratic society the elevated class, though small in number, sets the fashion in opinion and feeling, even virtue will, in that state of society, seem to be most strongly recommended by arguments addressing themselves to pride; in a democracy, by those which address themselves to self-interest. In the one, we hear chiefly of the beauty and dignity of virtue, the grandeur of self-sacrifice; in the other, of honesty the best policy, the value of character, and the common interest of every individual in the good of the whole.

Neither the one nor the other of these modes of feeling, our author is well aware, constitutes moral excellence; which must have a deeper foundation than either the calculations of self-interest, or the emotions of self-flattery. But as an auxiliary to that higher principle, and as far as possible a substitute for it when it is absent, the latter of the two, in his opinion, though the least sentimental, will stand the most wear.

'The principle of enlightened self-interest is not a lofty one, but it is clear and sure. It does not aim at mighty objects, but it attains, without impracticable efforts, all those at which it aims. As it lies within the reach of all capacities, every one can without difficulty apprehend and retain it. By its adaptation to human weaknesses, it easily obtains great dominion; nor is its dominion precarious, since it employs self-interest itself to correct self-interest, and uses, to direct the passions, the very instrument which excites them.

'The doctrine of enlightened self-interest produces no great acts of self-sacrifice, but it suggests daily small acts of self-denial. By itself it cannot suffice to make a virtuous man,

but it disciplines a multitude of citizens in habits of regularity, temperance, moderation, foresight, self-command: and if it does not at once lead men to virtue by their will, it draws them gradually in that direction by their habits. If the principle of 'interest rightly understood' were to sway the whole moral world, extraordinary virtues would doubtless be more rare; but I think that gross depravity would then also be less common. That principle, perhaps, prevents some men from rising far above the level of mankind; but a great number of others, who were falling below that level, are caught and upheld by it. Observe some few individuals, they are lowered by it; survey mankind, it is raised.

'I am not afraid to say, that the principle of enlightened self-interest appears to me the best suited of all philosophical theories to the wants of the men of our time; and that I regard it as their chief remaining security against themselves. Towards it, therefore, the minds of the moralists of our age should turn; even should they judge it incomplete, it must nevertheless be adopted as necessary.

'No power upon earth can prevent the increasing equality of conditions from impelling the human mind to seek out what is useful, or from inclining every member of the community to concentrate his affections on himself. It must therefore be expected that personal interest will become more than ever the principal, if not the sole spring of men's actions; but it remains to be seen how each man will understand his personal interest.

'I do not think that the doctrine of self-interest, as it is professed in America, is self-evident in all its parts; but it contains a great number of truths so evident, that men, if they are but instructed, cannot fail to see them. Instruct them, then, at all hazards; for the age of implicit self-sacrifice and instinctive virtues is already flying far away from us, and the time is fast approaching when freedom, public peace, and social order itself, will not be able to exist without instruction.' —(vol. iii. part ii. chap. 8.)

M. de Tocqueville considers a democratic state of

society as eminently tending to give the strongest impulse to the desire of physical well-being. He ascribes this, not so much to the equality of conditions as to their mobility. In a country like America every one may acquire riches; no one, at least, is artificially impeded in acquiring them; and hardly any one is born to them. Now, these are the conditions under which the passions which attach themselves to wealth, and to what wealth can purchase, are the strongest. Those who are born in the midst of affluence are generally more or less *blasés* to its enjoyments. They take the comfort or luxury to which they have always been accustomed, as they do the air they breathe. It is not *le but de la vie*, but *une manière de vivre.* An aristocracy, when put to the proof, has in general shown wonderful facility in enduring the loss of riches and of physical comforts. The very pride, nourished by the elevation which they owed to wealth, supports them under the privation of it. But to those who have chased riches laboriously for half their lives, to lose it is the loss of all; *une vie manquée;* a disappointment greater than can be endured. In a democracy, again, there is no contented poverty. No one being forced to remain poor; many who were poor daily becoming rich, and the comforts of life being apparently within the reach of all, the desire to appropriate them descends to the very lowest rank. Thus,—

'The desire of acquiring the comforts of the world haunts the imagination of the poor, and the dread of losing them that of the rich. Many scanty fortunes spring up; those who possess them have a sufficient share of physical gratifications to conceive a taste for those pleasures—not enough to satisfy it. They never procure them without exertion, and they

never indulge in them without apprehension. They are therefore always straining to pursue or to retain gratifications so precious, so incomplete, and so fugitive.

'If I inquire what passion is most natural to men who are at once stimulated and circumscribed by the obscurity of their birth or the mediocrity of their fortune, I can discover none more peculiarly appropriate to them than this love of physical prosperity. The passion for physical comforts is essentially a passion of the middle classes; with those classes it grows and spreads, and along with them it becomes preponderant. From them it mounts into the higher orders of society, and descends into the mass of the people.

'I never met in America with any citizen so poor as not to cast a glance of hope and longing towards the enjoyments of the rich, or whose imagination did not indulge itself by anticipation in those good things which fate still obstinately withheld from him.

'On the other hand, I never perceived, amongst the wealthier inhabitants of the United States, that proud contempt of the indulgences of riches, which is sometimes to be met with even in the most opulent and dissolute aristocracies. Most of these wealthy persons were once poor; they have felt the stimulus of privation, they have long struggled with adverse fortune; and now that the victory is won, the passions which accompanied the contest have survived it; their minds are, as it were, intoxicated by the petty enjoyments which they have pursued for forty years.

'Not but that in the United States, as elsewhere, there are a certain number of wealthy persons, who, having come into their property by inheritance, possess, without exertion, an opulence they have not earned. But even these are not less devotedly attached to the pleasures of material life. The love of physical comfort is become the predominant taste of the nation; the great current of man's passions runs in that channel, and sweeps everything along in its course.'—(vol. iii. part ii. chap. 10.)

A regulated sensuality thus establishes itself—the

parent of effeminacy rather than of debauchery; paying respect to the social rights of other people and to the opinion of the world; not 'leading men away in search of forbidden enjoyments, but absorbing them in the pursuit of permitted ones. This spirit is frequently combined with a species of religious morality; men wish to be as well off as they can in this world, without foregoing their chance of another.'

From the preternatural stimulus given to the desire of acquiring and of enjoying wealth, by the intense competition which necessarily exists where an entire population are the competitors, arises the restlessness so characteristic of American life.

'It is strange to see with what feverish ardour the Americans pursue their own welfare; and to watch the vague dread that constantly torments them lest they should not have chosen the shortest path which may lead to it. A native of the United States clings to this world's goods as if he were certain never to die, and is so hasty in grasping at all within his reach, that one would suppose he was constantly afraid of not living long enough to enjoy them. He clutches everything, he holds nothing fast, but soon loosens his grasp to pursue fresh gratifications. . . . . .

'At first sight there is something surprising in this strange unrest of so many happy men, uneasy in the midst of abundance. The spectacle is, however, as old as the world; the novelty is to see a whole people furnish an example of it. . . . .

'When all the privileges of birth and fortune are abolished, when all professions are accessible to all, and a man's own energies may place him at the top of any one of them, an easy and unbounded career seems open to his ambition, and he will readily persuade himself that he is born to no vulgar destinies. But this is an erroneous notion, which is corrected by daily experience. The same equality which allows every

citizen to conceive these lofty hopes, renders all the citizens individually feeble. It circumscribes their powers on every side, while it gives freer scope to their desires. Not only are they restrained by their own weakness, but they are met at every step by immense obstacles which they did not at first perceive. They have swept away the privileges of some of their fellow-creatures which stood in their way; but they have now to encounter the competition of all. The barrier has changed its shape rather than its place. When men are nearly alike, and all follow the same track, it is very difficult for any one individual to get on fast, and cleave a way through the homogeneous throng which surrounds and presses upon him. This constant strife between the wishes springing from the equality of conditions and the means it supplies to satisfy them, harasses and wearies the mind.'—(vol. iii. part ii. chap. 13.)

And hence, according to M. de Tocqueville, while every one is devoured by ambition, hardly any one is ambitious on a large scale. Among so many competitors for but a few great prizes, none of the candidates starting from the vantage ground of an elevated social position, very few can hope to gain those prizes, and they not until late in life. Men in general, therefore, do not look so high. A vast energy of passion in a whole community is developed and squandered in the petty pursuit of petty advancements in fortune, and the hurried snatching of petty pleasures.

To sum up our author's opinion of the dangers to which mankind are liable as they advance towards equality of condition; his fear, both in government and in intellect and morals, is not of too great liberty, but of too ready submission; not of anarchy, but of servility; not of too rapid change, but of Chinese stationariness. As democracy advances, the opinions of mankind on

most subjects of general interest will become, he believes, as compared with any former period, more rooted and more difficult to change; and mankind are more and more in danger of losing the moral courage and pride of independence, which make them deviate from the beaten path, either in speculation or in conduct. Even in politics, it is to be apprehended lest, feeling their personal insignificance, and conceiving a proportionally vast idea of the importance of society at large; being jealous, moreover, of one another, but not jealous of the central power which derives its origin from the majority, or which at least is the faithful representative of its desire to annihilate every intermediate power—they should allow that central government to assume more and more control, engross more and more of the business of society; and, on condition of making itself the organ of the general mode of feeling and thinking, should suffer it to relieve mankind from the care of their own interests, and keep them under a kind of tutelage; trampling meanwhile with considerable recklessness, as often as convenient, upon the rights of individuals, in the name of society and the public good.

Against these political evils the corrective to which our author looks is popular education, and, above all, the spirit of liberty, fostered by the extension and dissemination of political rights. Democratic institutions, therefore, are his remedy for the worst mischiefs to which a democratic state of society is exposed. As for those to which democratic institutions are themselves liable, these, he holds, society must struggle with, and bear with so much of them as it cannot find the means of conquering. For M. de Tocque-

ville is no believer in the reality of mixed governments. There is, he says, always and everywhere, a strongest power: in every government either the king, the aristocracy, or the people, have an effective predominance, and can carry any point on which they set their heart. 'When a community really comes to have a mixed government, that is, to be equally divided between two adverse principles, it is either falling into a revolutionary state or into dissolution.' M. de Tocqueville believes that the preponderant power which must exist everywhere, is most rightly placed in the body of the people. But he thinks it most pernicious that this power, whether residing in the people or elsewhere, should be 'checked by no obstacles which may retard its course, and force it to moderate its own vehemence.' The difference, in his eyes, is great between one sort of democratic institutions and another. That form of democracy should be sought out and devised, and in every way endeavoured to be carried into practice, which, on the one hand, most exercises and cultivates the intelligence and mental activity of the majority; and, on the other, breaks the headlong impulses of popular opinion, by delay, rigour of forms, and adverse discussion. 'The organization and the establishment of democracy' on these principles 'is the great political problem of our time.'

And when this problem is solved, there remains an equally serious one; to make head against the tendency of democracy towards bearing down individuality, and circumscribing the exercise of the human faculties within narrow limits. To sustain the higher pursuits of philosophy and art; to vindicate and

protect the unfettered exercise of reason, and the moral freedom of the individual—these are purposes to which, under a democracy, the superior spirits, and the government so far as it is permitted, should devote their utmost energies.

'I shall conclude by one general idea, which comprises not only all the particular ideas which have been expressed in the present chapter, but also most of those which it is the object of this book to treat of.

'In the ages of aristocracy which preceded our own, there were private persons of great power, and a social authority of extreme weakness. The principal efforts of the men of those times were required, to strengthen, aggrandize, and secure the supreme power; and, on the other hand, to circumscribe individual independence within narrower limits, and to subject private interests to public. Other perils and other cares await the men of our age. Amongst the greater part of modern nations, the government, whatever may be its origin, its constitution, or its name, has become almost omnipotent, and private persons are falling, more and more, into the lowest stage of weakness and dependence.

'The general character of old society was diversity; unity and uniformity were nowhere to be met with. In modern society, all things threaten to become so much alike, that the peculiar characteristics of each individual will be entirely lost in the uniformity of the general aspect. Our forefathers were ever prone to make an improper use of the notion, that private rights ought to be respected; and we are naturally prone, on the other hand, to exaggerate the idea, that the interest of an individual ought to bend to the interest of the many.

'The political world is metamorphosed; new remedies must henceforth be sought for new disorders. To lay down extensive, but distinct and immovable limits to the action of the ruling power; to confer certain rights on private persons, and secure to them the undisputed enjoyment of their

rights; to enable individual man to maintain whatever independence, strength, and originality he still possesses; to raise him by the side of society at large, and uphold him in that position;—these appear to me the main objects for the legislator in the age upon which we are now entering.

'It would seem as if the rulers of our time sought only to use men in order to effect great things: I wish that they would try a little more to make great men; that they would set less value upon the work, and more upon the workman; that they would never forget that a nation cannot long remain strong when every man belonging to it is individually weak; and that no form or combination of social polity has yet been devised to make an energetic people out of a community of citizens personally feeble and pusillanimous.'—(vol. iv. part iv. chap. 7.)

If we were here to close this article, and leave these noble speculations to produce their effect without further comment, the reader probably would not blame us. Our recommendation is not needed in their behalf. That nothing on the whole comparable in profundity to them had yet been written on Democracy, will scarcely be disputed by any one who has read even our hasty abridgment of them. We must guard, at the same time, against attaching to these conclusions, or to any others that can result from such inquiries, a character of scientific certainty that can never belong to them. Democracy is too recent a phenomenon, and of too great magnitude, for any one who now lives to comprehend its consequences. A few of its more immediate tendencies may be perceived or surmised; what other tendencies, destined to overrule or to combine with these, lie behind, there are not grounds even to conjecture. If we revert to any similar fact in past history, any change

in human affairs approaching in greatness to what is passing before our eyes, we shall find that no prediction which could have been made at the time, or for many generations afterwards, would have borne any resemblance to what has actually been the course of events. When the Greek commonwealths were crushed, and liberty in the civilized world apparently extinguished by the Macedonian invaders; when a rude unlettered people of Italy stretched their conquests and their dominion from one end to the other of the known world; when that people in turn lost its freedom and its old institutions, and fell under the military despotism of one of its own citizens;—what similarity is there between the effects we now know to have been produced by these causes, and anything which the wisest person could then have anticipated from them? When the Roman empire, containing all the art, science, literature, and industry of the world, was overrun, ravaged, and dismembered by hordes of barbarians, everybody lamented the destruction of civilization, in an event which is now admitted to have been the necessary condition of its renovation. When the Christian religion had existed but for two centuries—when the Pope was only beginning to assert his ascendancy—what philosopher or statesman could have foreseen the destinies of Christianity, or the part which has been acted in history by the Catholic Church? It is thus with all other really great historical facts—the invention of gunpowder for instance, or of the printing-press; even when their direct operation is as exactly measurable, because as strictly mechanical, as these were, the mere scale on which they operate gives birth to end-

less consequences, of a kind which would have appeared visionary to the most far-seeing cotemporary wisdom.

It is not, therefore, without a deep sense of the uncertainty attaching to such predictions, that the wise would hazard an opinion as to the fate of mankind under the new democratic dispensation. But without pretending to judge confidently of remote tendencies, those immediate ones which are already developing themselves require to be dealt with as we treat any of the other circumstances in which we are placed;—by encouraging those which are salutary, and working out the means by which such as are hurtful may be counteracted. To exhort men to this, and to aid them in doing it, is the end for which M. de Tocqueville has written: and in the same spirit we will now venture to make one criticism upon him;—to point out one correction, of which we think his views stand in need; and for want of which they have occasionally an air of over-subtlety and false refinement, exciting the distrust of common readers, and making the opinions themselves appear less true, and less practically important, than, it seems to us, they really are.

M. de Tocqueville, then, has, at least apparently, confounded the effects of Democracy with the effects of Civilization. He has bound up in one abstract idea the whole of the tendencies of modern commercial society, and given them one name—Democracy; thereby letting it be supposed that he ascribes to equality of conditions, several of the effects naturally arising from the mere progress of national prosperity,

in the form in which that progress manifests itself in modern times.

It is no doubt true, that among the tendencies of commercial civilization, a tendency to the equalization of conditions is one, and not the least conspicuous. When a nation is advancing in prosperity—when its industry is expanding, and its capital rapidly augmenting—the number also of those who possess capital increases in at least as great a proportion; and though the distance between the two extremes of society may not be much diminished, there is a rapid multiplication of those who occupy the intermediate positions. There may be princes at one end of the scale and paupers at the other; but between them there will be a respectable and well-paid class of artisans, and a middle class who combine property and industry. This may be called, and is, a tendency to equalization. But this growing equality is only one of the features of progressive civilization; one of the incidental effects of the progress of industry and wealth: a most important effect, and one which, as our author shows, re-acts in a hundred ways upon the other effects, but not, therefore, to be confounded with the cause.

So far is it, indeed, from being admissible, that *mere* equality of conditions is the mainspring of those moral and social phenomena which M. de Tocqueville has characterized, that when some unusual chance exhibits to us equality of conditions by itself, severed from that commercial state of society and that progress of industry of which it is the natural concomitant, it produces few or none of the moral effects

ascribed to it. Consider, for instance, the French of Lower Canada. Equality of conditions is more universal there than in the United States; for the whole people, without exception, are in easy circumstances, and there are not even that considerable number of rich individuals who are to be found in all the great towns of the American Republic. Yet do we find in Canada that go-ahead spirit—that restless, impatient eagerness for improvement in circumstances—that mobility, that shifting and fluctuating, now up now down, now here now there—that absence of classes and class-spirit—that jealousy of superior attainments—that want of deference for authority and leadership—that habit of bringing things to the rule and square of each man's own understanding—which M. de Tocqueville imputes to the same cause in the United States? In all these respects the very contrary qualities prevail. We by no means deny that where the other circumstances which determine these effects exist, equality of conditions has a very perceptible effect in corroborating them. We think M. de Tocqueville has shown that it has. But that it is the exclusive, or even the principal cause, we think the example of Canada goes far to disprove.

For the reverse of this experiment, we have only to look at home. Of all countries in a state of progressive commercial civilization, Great Britain is that in which the equalization of conditions has made least progress. The extremes of wealth and poverty are wider apart, and there is a more numerous body of persons at each extreme, than in any other commercial community. From the habits of the population in regard to marriage, the poor have remained

poor; from the laws which tend to keep large masses of property together, the rich have remained rich; and often, when they have lost the substance of riches, have retained its social advantages and outward trappings. Great fortunes are continually accumulated, and seldom redistributed. In this respect, therefore, England is the most complete contrast to the United States. But in commercial prosperity, in the rapid growth of industry and wealth, she is the next after America, and not very much inferior to her. Accordingly we appeal to all competent observers, whether, in nearly all the moral and intellectual features of American society, as represented by M. de Tocqueville, this country does not stand next to America? whether, with the single difference of our remaining respect for aristocracy, the American people, both in their good qualities and in their defects, resemble anything so much as an exaggeration of our own middle class? whether the spirit, which is gaining more and more the ascendant with us, is not in a very great degree American? and whether all the moral elements of an American state of society are not most rapidly growing up?

For example, that entire unfixedness in the social position of individuals—that treading upon the heels of one another—that habitual dissatisfaction of each with the position he occupies, and eager desire to push himself into the next above it—has not this become, and is it not becoming more and more, an English characteristic? In England, as well as in America, it appears to foreigners, and even to Englishmen recently returned from a foreign country, as if everybody had but one wish—to improve his condi-

tion, never to enjoy it; as if no Englishman cared to cultivate either the pleasures or the virtues corresponding to his station in society, but solely to get out of it as quickly as possible; or if that cannot be done, and until it is done, to seem to have got out of it. 'The hypocrisy of luxury,' as M. de Tocqueville calls the maintaining an appearance beyond one's real expenditure, he considers as a democratic peculiarity. It is surely an English one. The highest class of all, indeed, is, as might be expected, comparatively exempt from these bad peculiarities. But the very existence of such a class, whose immunities and political privileges are attainable by wealth, tends to aggravate the struggle of the other classes for the possession of that passport to all other importance; and it perhaps required the example of America to prove that the 'sabbathless pursuit of wealth' could be as intensely prevalent, where there were no aristocratic distinctions to tempt to it.

Again, the mobility and fluctuating nature of individual relations—the absence of permanent ties, local or personal; how often has this been commented on as one of the organic changes by which the ancient structure of English society is becoming dissolved? Without reverting to the days of clanship, or to those in which the gentry led a patriarchal life among their tenantry and neighbours, the memory of man extends to a time when the same tenants remained attached to the same landlords, the same servants to the same household. But this, with other old customs, after progressively retiring to the remote corners of our island, has nearly taken flight altogether; and it may now be said that in all the relations of life, except

those to which law and religion have given permanence, change has become the general rule, and constancy the exception.

The remainder of the tendencies which M. de Tocqueville has delineated, may mostly be brought under one general agency as their immediate cause; the growing insignificance of individuals in comparison with the mass. Now, it would be difficult to show any country in which this insignificance is more marked and conspicuous than in England, or any incompatibility between that tendency and aristocratic institutions. It is not because the individuals composing the mass are all equal, but because the mass itself has grown to so immense a size, that individuals are powerless in the face of it; and because the mass having, by mechanical improvements, become capable of acting simultaneously, can compel not merely any individual, but any number of individuals, to bend before it. The House of Lords is the richest and most powerful collection of persons in Europe, yet they not only could not prevent, but were themselves compelled to pass, the Reform Bill. The daily actions of every peer and peeress are falling more and more under the yoke of *bourgeois* opinion; they feel every day a stronger necessity of showing an immaculate front to the world. When they do venture to disregard common opinion, it is in a body, and when supported by one another; whereas formerly every nobleman acted on his own notions, and dared be as eccentric as he pleased. No rank in society is now exempt from the fear of being peculiar, the unwillingness to be, or to be thought, in any respect original. Hardly anything now depends upon indi-

viduals, but all upon classes, and among classes mainly upon the middle class. That class is now the power in society, the arbiter of fortune and success. Ten times more money is made by supplying the wants, even the superfluous wants, of the middle, nay of the lower classes, than those of the higher. It is the middle class that now rewards even literature and art; the books by which most money is made are the cheap books; the greatest part of the profit of a picture is the profit of the engraving from it. Accordingly, all the intellectual effects which M. de Tocqueville ascribes to Democracy, are taking place under the democracy of the middle class. There is a greatly augmented number of moderate successes, fewer great literary and scientific reputations. Elementary and popular treatises are immensely multiplied, superficial information far more widely diffused; but there are fewer who devote themselves to thought for its own sake, and pursue in retirement those profounder researches, the results of which can only be appreciated by a few. Literary productions are seldom highly finished—they are got up to be read by many, and to be read but once. If the work sells for a day, the author's time and pains will be better laid out in writing a second, than in improving the first. And this is not because books are no longer written for the aristocracy: they never were so. The aristocracy (saving individual exceptions) never were a reading class. It is because books are now written for a numerous, and therefore an unlearned public; no longer principally for scholars and men of science, who have knowledge of their own, and are not imposed upon by half-knowledge—

who have studied the great works of genius, and can make comparisons.*

As for the decay of authority, and diminution of respect for traditional opinions, this could not well be so far advanced among an ancient people—all whose political notions rest on an historical basis, and whose institutions themselves are built on prescription, and not on ideas of expediency—as in America, where the whole edifice of government was constructed within the memory of man upon abstract principles. But surely this change also is taking place as fast as could be expected under the circumstances. And even this effect, though it has a more direct connexion with Democracy, has not an exclusive one. Respect for old opinions must diminish wherever science and knowledge are rapidly progressive. As the people in general become aware of the recent date of the most important physical discoveries, they are liable to form a rather contemptuous opinion of their ancestors. The mere visible fruits of scientific progress in a

* On this account, among others, we think M. de Tocqueville right in the great importance he attaches to the study of Greek and Roman literature; not as being without faults, but as having the contrary faults to those of our own day. Not only do those literatures furnish examples of high finish and perfection in workmanship, to correct the slovenly habits of modern hasty writing, but they exhibit, in the military and agricultural commonwealths of antiquity, precisely that order of virtues in which a commercial society is apt to be deficient; and they altogether show human nature on a grander scale: with less benevolence but more patriotism, less sentiment but more self-control; if a lower average of virtue, more striking individual examples of it; fewer small goodnesses, but more greatness, and appreciation of greatness; more which tends to exalt the imagination, and inspire high conceptions of the capabilities of human nature. If, as every one may see, the want of affinity of these studies to the modern mind is gradually lowering them in popular estimation, this is but a confirmation of the need of them, and renders it more incumbent upon those who have the power, to do their utmost towards preventing their decline.

wealthy society, the mechanical improvements, the steam-engines, the railroads, carry the feeling of admiration for modern and disrespect for ancient times, down even to the wholly uneducated classes. For that other mental characteristic which M. de Tocqueville finds in America—a positive, matter-of-fact spirit—a demand that all things shall be made clear to each man's understanding, an indifference to the subtler proofs which address themselves to more cultivated and systematically exercised intellects; for what may be called, in short, the dogmatism of common sense, we need not look beyond our own country. There needs no Democracy to account for this—there needs only the habit of energetic action, without a proportional development of the taste for speculation. Bonaparte was one of the most remarkable examples of it; and the diffusion of half-instruction, without any sufficient provision made by society for sustaining the higher cultivation, tends greatly to encourage its excess.

Nearly all those moral and social influences, therefore, which are the subject of M. de Tocqueville's second part, are shown to be in full operation in aristocratic England. What connexion they have with equality is with the growth of the middle class, not with the annihilation of the extremes. They are quite compatible with the existence of peers and *prolétaires;* nay, with the most abundant provision of both those varieties of human nature. If we were sure of retaining for ever our aristocratic institutions, society would no less have to struggle against all these tendencies; and perhaps even the loss of those insti-

tutions would not have so much effect as is supposed in accelerating their triumph.

The evil is not in the preponderance of a democratic class, but of any class. The defects which M. de Tocqueville points out in the American, and which we see in the modern English mind, are the ordinary ones of a commercial class. The portion of society which is predominant in America, and that which is attaining predominance here, the American Many, and our middle class, agree in being commercial classes. The one country is affording a complete, and the other a progressive exemplification, that whenever any variety of human nature becomes preponderant in a community, it imposes upon all the rest of society its own type; forcing all, either to submit to it or to imitate it.

It is not in China only that a homogeneous community is naturally a stationary community. The unlikeness of one person to another is not only a principle of improvement, but would seem almost to be the only principle. It is profoundly remarked by M. Guizot, that the short duration or stunted growth of the earlier civilizations arose from this, that in each of them some one element of human improvement existed exclusively, or so preponderatingly as to overpower all the others; whereby the community, after accomplishing rapidly all which that one element could do, either perished for want of what it could not do, or came to a halt, and became immoveable. It would be an error to suppose that such could not possibly be our fate. In the generalization which pronounces the 'law of progress' to be an inherent

attribute of human nature, it is forgotten that, among the inhabitants of our earth, the European family of nations is the only one which has ever yet shown any capability of spontaneous improvement, beyond a certain low level. Let us beware of supposing that we owe this peculiarity to any superiority of nature, and not rather to combinations of circumstances, which have existed nowhere else, and may not exist for ever among ourselves. The spirit of commerce and industry is one of the greatest instruments not only of civilization in the narrowest, but of improvement and culture in the widest sense: to it, or to its consequences, we owe nearly all that advantageously distinguishes the present period from the middle ages. So long as other co-ordinate elements of improvement existed beside it, doing what it left undone, and keeping its exclusive tendencies in equipoise by an opposite order of sentiments, principles of action, and modes of thought—so long the benefits which it conferred on humanity were unqualified. But example and theory alike justify the expectation, that with its complete preponderance would commence an era either of stationariness or of decline.

If to avert this consummation it were necessary that the class which wields the strongest power in society should be prevented from exercising its strength, or that those who are powerful enough to overthrow the government should not claim a paramount control over it, the case of civilized nations would be almost hopeless. But human affairs are not entirely governed by mechanical laws, nor men's characters wholly and irrevocably formed by their situation in life. Economical and social changes,

though among the greatest, are not the only forces which shape the course of our species; ideas are not always the mere signs and effects of social circumstances, they are themselves a power in history. Let the idea take hold of the more generous and cultivated minds, that the most serious danger to the future prospects of mankind is in the unbalanced influence of the commercial spirit—let the wiser and better-hearted politicians and public teachers look upon it as their most pressing duty, to protect and strengthen whatever, in the heart of man or in his outward life, can form a salutary check to the exclusive tendencies of that spirit—and we should not only have individual testimonies against it, in all the forms of genius, from those who have the privilege of speaking not to their own age merely, but to all time; there would also gradually shape itself forth a national education, which, without overlooking any other of the requisites of human well-being, would be adapted to this purpose in particular.

What is requisite in politics for the same end, is not that public opinion should not be, what it is and must be, the ruling power; but that, in order to the formation of the best public opinion, there should exist somewhere a great social support for opinions and sentiments different from those of the mass. The shape which that support may best assume is a question of time, place, and circumstance; but (in a commercial country, and an age when, happily for mankind, the military spirit is gone by) there can be no doubt about the elements which must compose it: they are, an agricultural class, a leisured class, and a learned class.

The natural tendencies of an agricultural class are in many respects the reverse of those of a manufacturing and commercial. In the first place, from their more scattered position, and less exercised activity of mind, they have usually a greater willingness to look up to, and accept of, guidance. In the next place, they are the class who have local attachments; and it is astonishing how much of character depends upon this one circumstance. If the agricultural spirit is not felt in America as a counterpoise to the commercial, it is because American agriculturists have no local attachments; they range from place to place, and are to all intents and purposes a commercial class. But in an old country, where the same family has long occupied the same land, the case will naturally be different. From attachment to places, follows attachment to persons who are associated with those places. Though no longer the permanent tie which it once was, the connexion between tenants and landlords is one not lightly broken off;—one which both parties, when they enter into it, desire and hope will be permanent. Again, with attachment to the place comes generally attachment to the occupation: a farmer seldom becomes anything but a farmer. The rage of money-getting can scarcely, in agricultural occupations, reach any dangerous height: except where bad laws have aggravated the natural fluctuations of price, there is little room for gambling; the rewards of industry and skill are sure but moderate; an agriculturist can rarely make a large fortune. A manufacturer or merchant, unless he can outstrip others, knows that others will outstrip him, and ruin him; while, in the irksome drudgery to which he

subjects himself as a means, there is nothing agreeable to dwell on except the ultimate end. But agriculture is in itself an interesting occupation, which few wish to retire from, and which men of property and education often pursue merely for their amusement. Men so occupied are satisfied with less gain, and are less impatient to realize it. Our town population, it has long been remarked, is becoming almost as mobile and uneasy as the American. It ought not to be so with our agriculturists; they ought to be the counterbalancing element in our national character; they should represent the type opposite to the commercial,—that of moderate wishes, tranquil tastes, cultivation of the excitements and enjoyments near at hand, and compatible with their existing position.

To attain this object, how much alteration may be requisite in the system of rack-renting and tenancy at will, we cannot undertake to show in this place. It is sufficiently obvious also that the corn-laws must disappear; there must be no feud raging between the commercial class and that by whose influence and example its excesses are to be tempered: men are not prone to adopt the characteristics of their enemies. Nor is this all. In order that the agricultural population should count for anything in politics, or contribute its part to the formation of the national character, it is absolutely necessary that it should be educated. And let it be remembered that, in an agricultural people, the diffusion of information and intelligence must necessarily be artificial;—the work of government, or of the superior classes. In populous towns, the mere collision of man with man, the

keenness of competition, the habits of society and discussion, the easy access to reading—even the dulness of the ordinary occupations, which drives men to other excitements—produce of themselves a certain development of intelligence. The least favoured class of a town population are seldom actually stupid, and have often in some directions a morbid keenness and acuteness. It is otherwise with the peasantry. Whatever it is desired that they should know, they must be taught; whatever intelligence is expected to grow up among them, must first be implanted, and sedulously nursed.

It is not needful to go into a similar analysis of the tendencies of the other two classes—a leisured, and a learned class. The capabilities which they possess for controlling the excess of the commercial spirit by a contrary spirit, are at once apparent. We regard it as one of the greatest advantages of this country over America, that it possesses both these classes; and we believe that the interests of the time to come are greatly dependent upon preserving them; and upon their being rendered, as they much require to be, better and better qualified for their important functions.

If we believed that the national character of England, instead of reacting upon the American character and raising it, was gradually assimilating itself to those points of it which the best and wisest Americans see with most uneasiness, it would be no consolation to us to think that we might possibly avoid the institutions of America; for we should have all the effects of her institutions, except those which are beneficial. The American Many are not essentially

a different class from our ten-pound householders; and if the middle class are left to the mere habits and instincts of a commercial community, we shall have a 'tyranny of the majority,' not the less irksome because most of the tyrants may not be manual labourers. For it is a chimerical hope to overbear or outnumber the middle class; whatever modes of voting, whatever redistribution of the constituencies, are really necessary for placing the government in their hands, those, whether we like it or not, they will assuredly obtain.

The ascendancy of the commercial class in modern society and politics is inevitable, and, under due limitations, ought not to be regarded as an evil. That class is the most powerful; but it needs not therefore be all-powerful. Now, as ever, the great problem in government is to prevent the strongest from becoming the only power; and repress the natural tendency of the instincts and passions of the ruling body, to sweep away all barriers which are capable of resisting, even for a moment, their own tendencies. Any counterbalancing power can henceforth exist only by the sufferance of the commercial class; but that it should tolerate some such limitation, we deem as important as that it should not itself be held in vassalage.

[As a specimen of the contrivances for 'organizing democracy,' which, without sacrificing any of its beneficial tendencies, are adapted to counterbalance and correct its characteristic infirmities, an extract is subjoined from another paper by the author, published in 1846, being a review of the 'Lettres Politiques' of M. Charles Duveyrier; a book which among many other valuable suggestions, anticipated Sir Charles Trevelyan in the proposal to make admission into the service of government in all cases the prize of success in a public and competitive examination.]

'Every people,' says M. Duveyrier, 'comprises, and probably will always comprise, two societies, an *administration* and a *public;* the one, of which the general interest is the supreme law, where positions are not hereditary, but the principle is that of classing its members according to their merit, and rewarding them according to their works; and where the moderation of salaries is compensated by their fixity, and especially by honour and consideration. The other, composed of landed proprietors, of capitalists, of masters and workmen, among whom the supreme law is that of inheritance, the principal rule of conduct is personal interest, competition and struggle the favourite elements.

'These two societies serve mutually as a counterpoise; they continually act and react upon one another. The public tends to introduce into the administration the stimulus naturally wanting to it, the principle of emulation. The administration, conformably to its appointed purpose, tends to introduce more and more into the mass of the public, elements of order and forethought. In this twofold direction, the administration and the public have rendered and do render daily to each other, reciprocal services.'

The Chamber of Deputies (he proceeds to say) represents the public and its tendencies. The Chamber of Peers represents, or from its constitution is fitted to represent, those who are or have been public functionaries: whose appointed duty and occupation it has been to look at questions from the point of view not of any mere local or sectional, but of the general interest; and who have the judgment and knowledge

resulting from labour and experience. To a body like this, it naturally belongs to take the initiative in all legislation, not of a constitutional or organic character. If, in the natural course of things, well-considered views of policy are anywhere to be looked for, it must be among such a body. To no other acceptance can such views, when originating elsewhere, be so appropriately submitted—through no other organ so fitly introduced into the laws.

We shall not enter into the considerations by which the author attempts to impress upon the Peers this elevated view of their function in the commonwealth. On a new body, starting fresh as a senate, those considerations might have influence. But the senate of France is not a new body. It set out on the discredited foundation of the old hereditary chamber; and its change of character only takes place gradually, as the members die off. To redeem a lost position is more difficult than to create a new one. The new members, joining a body of no weight, become accustomed to political insignificance; they have mostly passed the age of enterprise; and the Peerage is considered little else than an honourable retirement for the invalids of the public service. M. Duveyrier's suggestion has made some impression upon the public; it has gained him the public ear, and launched his doctrines into discussion; but we do not find that the conduct of the Peers has been at all affected by it. Energy is precisely that quality which, if men have it not of themselves, cannot be breathed into them by other people's advice and exhortations. There are involved, however, in this speculation, some ideas of

a more general character; not unworthy of the attention of those who concern themselves about the social changes which the future must produce.

There are, we believe, few real thinkers, of whatever party, who have not reflected with some anxiety upon the views which have become current of late, respecting the irresistible tendency of modern society towards democracy. The sure, and now no longer slow, advance, by which the classes hitherto in the ascendant are merging into the common mass, and all other forces giving way before the power of mere numbers, is well calculated to inspire uneasiness, even in those to whom democracy *per se* presents nothing alarming. It is not the uncontrolled ascendancy of popular power, but of any power, which is formidable. There is no one power in society, or capable of being constituted in it, of which the influences do not become mischievous as soon as it reigns uncontrolled—as soon as it becomes exempted from any necessity of being in the right, by being able to make its mere will prevail, without the condition of a previous struggle. To render its ascendancy safe, it must be fitted with correctives and counteractives, possessing the qualities opposite to its characteristic defects. Now, the defects to which the government of numbers, whether in the pure American, or in the mixed English form, is most liable, are precisely those of a public, as compared with an administration. Want of appreciation of distant objects and remote consequences; where an object is desired, want both of an adequate sense of practical difficulties, and of the sagacity necessary for eluding them; disregard of traditions, and of maxims sanctioned by experience; an undervaluing of the

importance of fixed rules, when immediate purposes require a departure from them—these are among the acknowledged dangers of popular government: and there is the still greater, though less recognised, danger, of being ruled by a spirit of suspicious and intolerant mediocrity. Taking these things into consideration, and also the progressive decline of the existing checks and counterpoises, and the little probability there is that the influence of mere wealth, still less of birth, will be sufficient hereafter to restrain the tendencies of the growing power by mere passive resistance; we do not think that a nation whose historical antecedents give it any choice, could select a fitter basis upon which to ground the counterbalancing power in the State, than the principle of the French Upper House. The defects of representative assemblies are, in substance, those of unskilled politicians. The mode of raising a power most competent to their correction, would be an organization and combination of the skilled. History affords the example of a government carried on for centuries with the greatest consistency of purpose, and the highest skill and talent, ever realized in public affairs; and it was constituted on this very principle. The Roman Senate was a Senate for life, composed of all who had filled high offices in the State, and were not disqualified by a public note of disgrace. The faults of the Roman policy were in its ends; which, however, were those of all the states of the ancient world. Its choice of means was consummate. This government, and others distantly approaching to it, have given to aristocracy all the credit which it has obtained for constancy and wisdom. A Senate of some such description, com-

posed of persons no longer young, and whose reputation is already gained, will necessarily lean to the Conservative side; but not with the blind, merely instinctive spirit of conservatism, generated by mere wealth or social importance unearned by previous labour. Such a body would secure a due hearing and a reasonable regard for precedent and established rule. It would disarm jealousy, by its freedom from any class interest; and while it never could become the really predominant power in the State, still, since its position would be the consequence of recognised merit and actual services to the public, it would have as much personal influence, and excite as little hostility, as is compatible with resisting in any degree the tendencies of the really strongest power.

There is another class of considerations connected with representative governments, to which we shall also briefly advert. In proportion as it has been better understood what legislation is, and the unity of plan as well as maturity of deliberation which are essential to it, thinking persons have asked themselves the question—Whether a popular body of 658 or 459 members, not specially educated for the purpose, having served no apprenticeship, and undergone no examination, and who transact business in the forms and very much in the spirit of a debating society, can have as its peculiarly appropriate office to make laws? Whether that is not a work certain to be spoiled by putting such a superfluous number of hands upon it? Whether it is not essentially a business for one, or a very small number, of most carefully prepared and selected individuals? And whether the proper office of a Representative Body,

(in addition to controlling the public expenditure, and deciding who shall hold office,) be not that of *discussing* all national interests; of giving expression to the wishes and feelings of the country; and granting or withholding its consent to the laws which others make, rather than themselves framing, or even altering them? The law of this and most other nations is already such a chaos, that the quality of what is yearly added, does not materially affect the general mass; but in a country possessed of a real Code or Digest, and desirous of retaining that advantage, who could think without dismay of its being tampered with at the will of a body like the House of Commons, or the Chamber of Deputies? Imperfect as is the French Code, the inconveniences arising from this cause are already strongly felt; and they afford an additional inducement for associating with the popular body a skilled Senate, or Council of Legislation, which, whatever might be its special constitution, must be grounded upon some form of the principle which we have now considered.

BAILEY ON BERKELEY'S THEORY OF VISION.*

THE doctrine concerning the original and derivative functions of the sense of sight, which, from the name of its author, is known as Berkeley's Theory of Vision, has remained, almost from its first promulgation, one of the least disputed doctrines in the most disputed and most disputable of all sciences, the Science of Man. This is the more remarkable, as no doctrine in mental philosophy is more at variance with first appearances, more contradictory to the natural prejudices of mankind. Yet this apparent paradox was no sooner published, than it took its place, almost without contestation, among established opinions; the warfare which has since distracted the world of metaphysics, has swept past this insulated position without disturbing it; and while so many of the other conclusions of the analytical school of mental philosophy, the school of Hobbes and Locke, have been repudiated with violence by the antagonist school, that of Common Sense or innate principles, this one doctrine has been recognised and upheld by the leading thinkers of both schools alike. Adam Smith, Reid, Stewart, and Whewell (not to go be-

* *Westminster Review*, October 1842.—'A Review of Berkeley's Theory of Vision, designed to show the Unsoundness of that Celebrated Speculation.' By Samuel Bailey, Author of 'Essays on the Formation and Publication of Opinions,' &c.

yond our own island) have made the doctrine as much their own, and have taken as much pains to enforce and illustrate it, as Hartley, Brown, or James Mill.

This general consent of the most contrary schools of thinkers in support of a doctrine which conflicts alike with the natural tendencies of the mind, and with the peculiar ones of the larger half of the speculative world, certainly does not prove the doctrine true. But it proves that the reasons capable of being urged in behalf of the doctrine, are such as a mind accustomed to any sort of psychological inquiry must find it very difficult to resist. If the doctrine be false, there must be something radically wrong in the received modes of studying mental phenomena. It is difficult to imagine that so many minds of the highest powers, so little accustomed to agree with one another, should have been led (the majority in opposition to the whole leaning and direction of their scientific habits) into this rare and difficult unanimity, by reasonings which are a mere tissue of paralogisms and *ignorationes elenchi*.

Such, however, is the thesis which Mr. Bailey, in the volume before us, has undertaken to defend; and Mr. Bailey is one who, on any subject on which he thinks fit to write, is entitled to a respectful hearing. He is entitled on this occasion to something more—to the thanks which are due to whoever, in the style and spirit of sober and scientific inquiry, calls in question a received opinion. The good which follows from such public questioning is not indeed without alloy. It fosters scepticism as to the worth of science, and by creating difference where there previously was agreement, enfeebles the authority of cultivated intel-

lects over the ignorant. But, on the other hand, such a break in the line of scientific prescription applies a wholesome stimulus to the activity of thinkers; it counteracts the tendency of speculation to grow torpid on the points on which general agreement has apparently been attained; and by not permitting philosophers to take opinions upon trust from their predecessors or from their former selves, constrains them to recal their attention to the substantial grounds on which those opinions were first adopted, and must still be received.

If the result of this re-examination be unfavourable to the received opinion, science is happily weeded of a prevailing error; if favourable, it is of no less importance that this too should be shown, and the dissentient, if not convinced, at least prevented from making converts. It is for the interest of philosophy, therefore, that a bold assault, by a champion whom no one can despise, upon one of the few doctrines of analytical psychology which were supposed to be out of the reach of doubt, should not be let pass without a minute examination and deliberate judgment.

It is necessary to begin by a clear statement of the doctrine which Mr. Bailey denies; especially as we think that an indistinct mode of conceiving and expressing the doctrine is the source of most of his apparent victories over it.

The theory of vision, commonly designated as Berkeley's, but in fact the received doctrine of modern metaphysicians, may be stated, then, as follows.

Of the information which we appear to receive, and which we really do, in the maturity of our faculties, receive through the eye, a part only is originally

and intuitively furnished by that sense; the remainder is the result of experience, and of an acquired power. The sense of sight informs us of nothing originally, except light and colours, and a certain arrangement of coloured lines and points. This arrangement constitutes what are called by opticians and astronomers apparent figure, apparent position, and apparent magnitude. Of real figure, position, and magnitude, the eye teaches us nothing; these are facts revealed exclusively by the sense of touch; but since differences in the reality are commonly accompanied by differences also in the appearance, the mind infers the real from the apparent in consequence of experience, and with a degree of accuracy proportioned to the correctness and completeness of the data which experience affords.

Further, those coloured appearances which are called visual or apparent position, figure, and magnitude, have existence only in two dimensions; or, to speak more properly, in as many directions as are capable of being traced on a plane surface. A line drawn from an object to the eye, or, in other words, the distance of an object from us, is not a visible thing. When we judge by the eye of the remoteness of any object, we judge by signs; the signs being no other than those which painters use when they wish to represent the difference between a near and a remote object. We judge an object to be more distant from us by the diminution of its apparent magnitude, that is, by linear perspective; or by that dimness or faintness of colour and outline which generally increases with the distance, in other words by aërial perspective.

Thus, then, the powers of the eyesight are of two classes, its original and its acquired powers; but the things which it discovers by its acquired powers seem to be perceived as directly as what it sees by its original capacities as a sense. Though the distance of an object from us is really a matter of judgment and inference, we cannot help fancying that we see it directly with our eyes; and though our sight can of itself inform us only of apparent magnitudes and figures, while it is our mind which from these infers the real, we believe that we see the real magnitudes and figures, or what we suppose to be so, not the apparent ones. A mistake occasioned by that law of the human mind (a consequence and corollary of the law of association) whereby a process of reasoning, which from habit is very rapidly performed, resembles, so closely as to be mistaken for, an act of intuition.

But although opposed to first impressions and common apprehension, the doctrine in question is confirmed by a great mass of common experience. Visible objects, seen through a clear atmosphere, as travellers in southern countries never fail to remark, seem much nearer to us; because they are seen with less diminution of their customary brightness, than has generally been the case at that distance in our previous experience. A known object, seen through a mist, seems not only farther off, but also larger than usual—a most convincing instance; for in this case the visual magnitude of the object, depending on the size of its picture on the retina, remains exactly the same; but from the same apparent size we infer larger real size, because we have first been led by the dimness of the object to imagine it farther off,

and at this greater distance there is need of a larger object to produce the same visual magnitude. So powerful, however, is the law of mind, by virtue of which a rapid inference seems to be an intuition, that when we look through a mist we cannot hinder ourselves from fancying that we actually see things larger; although their visual magnitude, which alone even Mr. Bailey contends that we see, remains, and must remain, precisely the same.

Again, where we have no experience, our eyesight gives us no information either of distance or of real magnitude. We cannot judge by the eye, of the distance of the heavenly bodies from us, nor does any one of them appear nearer or farther off than another; because we have no means of comparing their brightness or their apparent magnitude as it is, with what it would be at some known distance. As little do we fancy we can judge by the eye of the magnitudes of those bodies; or if a child fancies the moon to be no larger than a cheese, it is because he forgets that it is farther off, and draws from the visual appearance an inference, which would be well grounded if the moon and the cheese were really at an equal distance from him.

Our purpose, however, in this place, was not to illustrate or prove the theory, but to state it. In a few words, then, it is this: That the information obtained through the eye consists of two things—sensations, and inferences from those sensations: that the sensations are merely colours variously arranged, and changes of colour; that all else is inference, the work of the intellect, not of the eye; or if, in compliance with common usage, we ascribe it to the eye,

we must say that the eye does it not by an original, but by an acquired power—a power which the eye exercises, through, and by means of, the reasoning or inferring faculty.

This is the 'Berkeleian Theory of Vision,' accurately stated; and this statement of it comprises the essence of that to which the subsequent schools of psychology have unanimously assented.

But with the doctrine in this simple form we cannot find that Mr. Bailey has in any one instance really grappled. He has gone back to the primitive phraseology in which the theory was propounded by Berkeley and his immediate successors; men to whom the glory belongs of originating many important discoveries, but who seldom added to this the easier, yet still rarer, merit, of expressing those discoveries in language logically unexceptionable. No one can read the metaphysicians of the last two centuries, especially those of our own country, without acknowledging that (with one or two exceptions, among whom the great name of Hobbes stands pre-eminent) the very best of them are often wanting either in the determinateness of thought, or the command over language, which would make their words express shortly, precisely, and unambiguously, the very thing they mean. Accordingly, there are few of the great truths of psychology which are not, in almost all writings antecedent to the present century, wrapped up in phrases more or less equivocal and vague, through which one person may clearly see what is really within, but another, of perhaps equal powers, will, in the words of Locke, instead of 'seizing the scope' of the speculation, 'stick in the incidents.'

Upon such vague phrases Mr. Bailey has wasted his strength, never placing the truth which they represented plainly and unambiguously before his mind; and he imagines himself to have triumphed over the doctrine, while he has been kept from contact with it by a rampart of words which he himself has helped to raise.

One of the principal of these phrases is Perception, a word which has wrought almost as notable mischief in metaphysics as the word Idea. The writer who first made Perception a word of mark and likelihood in mental philosophy was Reid, who made use of it as a means of begging several of the questions in dispute between himself and his antagonists. Mr. Bailey, with, we admit, good warrant from precedent, has throughout his book darkened the discussion, by stating the question, not thus:—What information do we gain, or what facts do we learn, by the sense of sight? but thus:—What do we perceive by the eye, or what are our perceptions of sight? The word seems made on purpose to confuse the distinction between what the eye tells us directly, and what it teaches by way of inference; and we shall presently see how completely, in our author's case, the cause has produced its effect.

It is in the first section of his second chapter that the author enters upon his argument; and in this he inquires whether 'outness' (as it is termed by Berkeley) is 'immediately of itself perceived by sight?'—in other words, whether we naturally, and antecedently to experience, see things to be external to ourselves.

Berkeley alleged that to a person born blind, and

suddenly enabled to see, all objects would seem to be in his eye, or rather, in his mind. It would be a more correct version, however, of the theory, to say that such a person would at first have no conception of *in* or *out*, and would only be conscious of colours, but not of objects. When by his sense of touch he became acquainted with objects, and had time to associate mentally the objects he touched with the colours he saw, then, and not till then, would he begin to see objects. Or, adopting Mr. Bailey's summary statement of Berkeley's views,

'Outness is not immediately of itself perceived by sight, but only suggested to our thoughts by certain visible ideas and sensations attending vision. * * * By a connexion taught us by experience, visible ideas and visual sensations come to signify and suggest outness to us, after the same manner that the words of any language suggest the ideas they are made to stand for.'

To this Mr. Bailey replies, that the law of mind by which one thing suggests another, cannot produce any such effect as the one here ascribed to it. If we have had an internal feeling A, at the same time with an external sensation B, and this conjunction has occurred often, the two will in time suggest one another: when the internal feeling occurs, it will bring to mind the external one, and *vice versâ*. But Berkeley's theory, he says, demands more than this. Berkeley maintains that because the internal feeling has been found to be accompanied by the external one, it will, when experienced alone, not only suggest the external sensation, 'but absolutely be regarded as external itself, or rather, be converted into the perception of an external object;'—just as if

one were to assert that the sound 'rose,' by suggesting the visible flower, became itself visible.

'It may be asserted,' says Mr. Bailey, 'without hesitation, that there is nothing in the whole operations of the human mind analogous to such a process;'

and it may be asserted as unhesitatingly that Berkeley's theory implies no such absurdity.

The internal feeling which, when received by sight, becomes a sign of the presence of an external object, is a sensation of colour. Does Berkeley pretend, or is it a fact, that this sensation is ever regarded as external? Certainly not. What we regard as external is not the sensation, but the cause of the sensation—the thing which by its presence is supposed to give rise to the sensation: the coloured object, or the quality residing in that object, which we term its colour. Berkeley is not, as Mr. Bailey supposes, bound to show that the sensation of colour is 'converted into the perception of an external object,' since nobody is bound to prove a proposition which nobody can understand. Expressed in unequivocal language, what Mr. Bailey calls the perception of an object is simply a judgment of the intellect that an object is present. Berkeley is not called upon to show that the sensation of colour can be 'converted' into this judgment, because his theory requires no such conversion. It requires that the judgment should follow as an inference from the sensation, and Berkeley is bound to show that this is possible. And this he can do, since there is no law of mind more familiar than that by which, when two things have constantly been experienced together, we infer from the presence of the one the presence of the other.

Thus it is, that from using the obscure word 'perception' instead of the intelligible words 'sensation' and 'judgment' or 'inference,' our author leaves his antagonist unanswered, and triumphs over a shadow. It is true that Berkeley and Berkeley's adherents have set him the example of this misleading phraseology. But Mr. Bailey lives in a more accurate age, and should use language more accurately.

In the second section (we pass over some observations in the first, to which the answer is obvious) the author proceeds to inquire whether we naturally see things at different distances, or whether our perception by the eye of distance from us, results (as Berkeley contends) from an association, formed by experience, between the usual signs of distance, and ideas of space originally derived from the touch.

And here Mr. Bailey has to confute an assertion of Berkeley, that

'Distance of itself and immediately cannot be seen. For distance being a line directed endwise to the eye, it projects only one point in the fund of the eye, which point remains invariably the same, whether the distance be longer or shorter;'

or, as Adam Smith has completed the expression of the idea, the distance of an object from the eye 'must appear to it but as one point.'

It is not easy to comprehend how the meaning of this argument can be unintelligible, we do not say to a person of Mr. Bailey's acquirements, but to any one who knows as much of optics as is now commonly taught in children's books. Our author, however, professes himself unable to understand it, but surmises that it proceeds on the fallacy of supposing that

we 'see the rays of light' that come from the object, which it is evident we do not.

The argument supposes no such thing. The argument is this. We cannot see anything which is not painted on our retina; and we see things alike or unlike, according as they are painted on the retina alike or unlike. The distance between an object to our right and an object to our left is a line presented sideways, and is therefore painted on our retina as a line; the distance of an object from us is a line presented endways, and is represented on the retina by a point. It seems obvious, therefore, that we must be able, by the eye alone, to discriminate between unequal distances of the former kind, but not of the latter. Unequal lines drawn across our sphere of vision, we can see to be unequal, because the lines which image them in the eye are also unequal. But the distances of objects from us are represented on our retina in all cases by single points; and all points being equal, all such distances must appear equal, or rather, we are unable to see them in the character of distances at all.

This argument, which involves no premises but what all admit, does positively prove that distance from us cannot be seen in the way in which we see the distances (or rather apparent distances) of objects from one another, namely, by the original powers of the sense of sight. Berkeley's argument proves conclusively that distance from the eye is not seen, but inferred. It cannot be seen as other things are seen, because it projects no image on the retina; it must be seen indirectly, that is, not seen, but judged of from signs,—namely, from those

differences in the appearance of an object, whether in respect of magnitude or colour, which are physically consequent upon its being at a greater or a smaller distance.

And here, so far as concerns one principal part of the question at issue, the argument might close. It is demonstrated that the distance of an object is not 'perceived' directly, but by means of intermediate signs; not seen by the eye, but inferred by the mind. And this is not only the most essential, but the only paradoxical part of Berkeley's theory.

It is true, there remains a supposition which our author may adopt, and which, from occasional expressions, it might be concluded that he is willing to adopt. He may give up the point of actually seeing distance, and admitting that we do not see it, but judge of it from evidence, he may maintain that the interpretation of that evidence is intuitive, and not the result of experience. He may say that we do not see an object to be farther off, but infer it to be so from its looking smaller; not, however, because we have heretofore observed that such is the case, but by a natural instinct, which precedes experience and anticipates its results.

There are thus two possible forms of our author's doctrine. He may affirm that we are apprised of distance through the eye, by actually seeing it; or he may say with Berkeley, that remoteness is not seen, but inferred from paleness of colour and diminution of apparent magnitude,—but may differ from him by asserting that the inference is instinctive, instead of the slow result of gradual experience. The former doctrine is demonstrably false; the latter not so; it

may perhaps be refuted, but cannot be taxed with absurdity.

The author, however, from the imperfect way in which he has conceived the question, seems never to have finally made his choice between these two suppositions.* When he draws near to close quarters (he never comes quite close), and is compelled to express himself with a nearer than usual approach to precision, his language seems to imply that the perception of distance from us is not a process of sense, but an instinctive inference of the mind. But he cannot have consciously elected this doctrine, to the exclusion of the other, or he would scarcely make the large use he does, for confirming his theory, of its supposed conformity to the 'universal impressions of mankind.' To those natural impressions his doctrine, thus understood, is as repugnant as Berkeley's. Mankind, when they use their eyesight to estimate the distance of an object, do not fancy themselves to be interpreting signs; they are not conscious that they are judging by the apparent smallness of the object, and by the loss of brilliancy which it sustains from the intervening atmosphere. If their unreflecting opinion goes for anything, it goes to prove that we actually *see* distance; for they are unaware of any difference between the process of seeing the distance of the tree from the house, and seeing the distance of the house from their eye.

If the author, abandoning his claim to have common prejudices on his side, should finally acquiesce in the opinion that what he calls our perception of nearness

* [Mr. Bailey has since explained that he adhered to the theory of direct vision, and repudiated that of instinctive interpretation of signs.]

and remoteness by the eye, is an instinctive interpretation of those variations in colour and apparent magnitude which really do accompany varieties of distance; his doctrine will then lie open to only one objection—the superfluousness of assuming an instinct to account for that, which knowledge derived from experience will so well explain. Long before a child gives evidence of distinguishing distances by the eye with any approach to accuracy, he has had time more than enough to learn from experience the correspondence between greater distance to the outstretched arm, and smaller magnitude to the eye. At any age at which a child is capable of forming expectations from past experience, he must have had experience of this correspondence, and must have learnt to ground expectations upon it.

Mr. Bailey next takes notice of the argument which Berkeley's followers have drawn from the effect of pictures; from the fact that things may be so represented on a flat surface as to deceive the sight. They conclude from this, that though we appear to see solidity, we in truth only infer it from signs; because we equally appear to see it when the solidity is no longer present, provided the signs are. This argument, therefore, aims at proving no more than that what we call seeing solidity is inferring solidity, a proposition which, as we have already observed, our author could afford to admit. Nevertheless, he understands this argument no better than he understood the one which preceded it. He says it is

'Virtually arguing that because planes can be made to look solid, solid objects are originally seen plane. * * * Solid objects, they say, must be originally seen as plane,

because they may be delineated on a plane surface so as to look solid:'

which, as he justly says, would be an unwarranted inference.

But Mr. Bailey misconceives the scope of the argument to which he fancies that he is replying. The fact that a plane may be mistaken for a solid, is not urged to show that a solid *must*, but only that it *may*, be seen originally as a plane. Since even a plane, so coloured as to make the same image on the retina which a solid would make, is mistaken for a solid, without doubt an actual solid will be perceived to be such, even if it be seen in no other manner than as the plane is. The fact that we recognise a solid as a solid, is no proof that so far as the mere eye is concerned we do not see it as a plane; since a picture, which is certainly seen only as a plane, is yet recognised as a solid, and appears to the person himself to be seen as such.

We proceed to another of our author's arguments. If it were true, he says, that we originally see all objects in a party-coloured plane, but afterwards find by experience that this visual appearance is uniformly connected with a tangible object, we should indeed associate the two ideas, but this subsequent association would not alter the original perception. If we before saw a party-coloured plane, we should continue to see it. Though the idea of a tangible object would be uniformly suggested, the impression of sight which suggested it would in no wise be changed. As no touching or handling can make us see the images in a mirror to be on the surface, but we cannot help seeing them beyond it, so if all objects, near and remote,

appeared to the sight to be at the same distance, all the touching or feeling in the world could not make us see them to be at various distances.

Here, again, the author has permitted a set of indefinite phrases to intercept his view of the position which he has undertaken to subvert. It is quite true that no association between the sight and the touch will ever make us *see* anything that the eyesight has not the power of showing us. If we originally see only a party-coloured plane, no touching or handling will ever make us *see* anything more. But touching and handling may well make us infer something more; and, according to Berkeley's theory, this is all it needs to do. The very pith and marrow of the theory is, that what Mr. Bailey calls seeing things at various distances is, in truth, inferring them to be so, and that neither at first nor at last do we actually *see* anything but the colours. Berkeley, therefore, is under no necessity of affirming that experience or association alters the nature of our perceptions of sense. All that belongs to sense, according to him, remains the same; what experience does is to superadd to the impression of sense an instantaneous act of judgment.

In what we have already written we have answered the essential part of so much of our author's argument, that we may forbear to follow him into the various modes of statement by which he endeavours to adapt his refutation to the varieties of Berkeley's language. The same radical misconception pervades them all—that of representing Berkeley as pretending that a conception derived from touch is actually transmuted into a perception of sight. It is still, as before, the word perception which disguises from our author

the point in issue. He cannot see that what he calls a perception of sight is simply a judgment of the intellect, inferring from a sensation of sight the presence of an object. The idea of an object, being an idea derived from touch, ideas of touch are the foundation of this judgment of the intellect; but it is not therefore necessary to consider them as being, in any sense whatever of the term, 'transmuted,' either into a judgment or into a perception.

Mr. Bailey's next argument is the statement of a psychological fact, which, as a fact, is correct, and a necessary completion and explanation of the theory with which he imagines it to conflict. According to Berkeley's doctrine, says Mr. Bailey, what takes place when we appear to ourselves to see distance, is merely a close and rapid suggestion of tangible distance, called up by certain visual appearances or signs; and the mind (as is its custom) does not dwell upon the sign, nor remember even the next minute that precise appearance of the object, which indicated the distance, but rushes at once from the sign to the thing signified. And accordingly, a person learning to draw, finds it very difficult to recall accurately the visual appearance, or, even when the scene is before his eyes, to imitate on paper the apparent positions and figures, without ever altering them by the substitution of the real ones. So inveterate is the habit of neglecting the sign and attending only to the thing signified, that it is a hard and difficult task to delineate objects as we see them; our tendency is always to delineate them as we know them to be.

Now, if these doctrines be true, argues our author —if visible appearances are mere signs, which the

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mind rapidly glides over, and hurries to the tactual perceptions with which they are associated, we ought surely to be very distinctly conscious of the tactual reminiscences supposed to be thus suggested. Yet the fact is, that when we look at objects, and judge of their positions and distances, we have so little consciousness of any tactual ideas, that it is almost questionable whether any are suggested at all. It is, in fact, with great difficulty that we recall this particular class of tactual impressions. Our ideas of tangible distance, form, and magnitude, instead of being peculiarly distinct, are peculiarly vague and shadowy; for the simple reason, that we are not in the habit of attending to those particular sensations of touch. And accordingly, our consciousness testifies that when we correct an erroneous visual impression of distance, we do so by comparing and collating it, not with tactual impressions, but with visual impressions received under different circumstances. When, in looking along an avenue of trees, the more remote of the trees appear to my eye to be close together, and when I correct this impression, and judge them to be farther apart than they appear, the thought which I recall is not the idea of a tangible space, but the recollection of the visible space which I saw intervening between them on some nearer view, or which I have seen to lie between the adjacent trees of other similar avenues.

In this argument, to which we have endeavoured to do no injustice in the mode of stating it, the facts alleged are indisputable. It is true that our ordinary processes of thought and judgment respecting outward objects are carried on, not by means of tactual ideas,

but of visual ideas which have acquired a tactual signification; and that this extensive supersession of the function of tactual ideas renders many of them dim, confused, and difficult to be recalled. But these facts, in themselves interesting and worthy of notice, are of no avail to prove that the visual ideas, which thus become our main symbols of tangible objects, have their tactual signification naturally, or obtain it from any other source than experience. At the age at which a child first learns that a diminution in brightness and in apparent magnitude implies increase of distance, the child's ideas of tangible extension and magnitude are not faint and faded, but fresh and vigorous. As for the subsequent fact, that when the suggesting power of the sign has been often exercised, our consciousness not only of the sign itself, but of much of what is signified by the sign, becomes much less acute, so accomplished a metaphysician as Mr. Bailey cannot be ignorant that this is the nature of all signs. It will not, for example, be asserted that the words of any language are significant by nature, or derive their power of suggesting ideas from any cause but association alone; yet nothing can be more notorious than that a word with which we are very familiar, is heard or uttered, and does its work as a sign, with the faintest possible suggestion of most of the sensible ideas which compose its meaning. For example, the word 'country:' a politician may reason, or an orator may expatiate, with the utmost cogency and effect, on the interests of the country, the prospects of the country; but in doing this have they distinctly present to the mind's eye the cornfields and meadows, the workshops and farmhouses, the thronged manufac-

tories and family circles, which are the real concrete signification of the word? Assuredly not: words, as used on common occasions, suggest no more of the ideas habitually associated with them, than the smallest portion that will enable the mind to do what those common occasions require; and it is only to persons of more than ordinary vividness of imagination, that the names of things ever recall more than the meagrest outline of even their own conceptions of the things.

Now if this be true of words, which are conventional signs, it is not less true of natural signs, such as our sensations of sight, which derive their power of suggestion not from convention, but from always occurring in conjunction with the things which they suggest. When once the visual appearances, from long experience, suggest the tactual impressions with extreme readiness and familiarity, it would be contrary to all we know of association to suppose that they will continue to suggest them with the original vivacity and force. As the mind, without attending to the sign, runs on to the thing signified, so does it also, without attending to the thing signified, run on to whatever else that thing suggests. Those vivid sensations of the touch and of the muscular frame from which the infant learned his first ideas of distance, would, when the necessity had ceased for actively attending to them, be more and more dimly recalled, while enough only would be distinctly suggested to enable the mind to go on to what it has next to do. The amount of distinct suggestion, and its precise nature, probably differ in different individuals; and in each the visual sign suggests, not so much the

tangible distance, as the measure by which, with that person, tangible distances are accustomed to be estimated. In our own experience we should say, that when we look at an object to judge of its distance from us, the idea suggested is commonly that of the length of time, or the quantity of motion, which would be requisite for reaching to the object if near to us, or walking up to it if at a distance.

The indistinctness, therefore, of our ideas of tactual extension and magnitude, and the fact of our carrying on most of our mental processes by means of their visual signs, without distinctly recalling the tactual impressions upon which our ideas of extension and magnitude were originally grounded, is no argument against Berkeley's theory, but is exactly what, from the laws of association, we should expect to happen supposing that theory to be true. And our author has failed, by this as much as by his other arguments, to strike an effective blow at the theory.

We may here close our examination of the controversial, and properly argumentative part of the book. The remainder of it is an attempt to show, by actual observation, that distances are distinguished by the eye before there has been time to form any association between the sight and the touch, and even before the sense of touch has been sufficiently exercised to be capable of yielding accurate ideas.

The facts adduced are of three kinds: relating either to human infants, to the young of the lower animals, or to persons born blind, and afterwards restored to sight.

Our author's facts relating to human infants are

singularly inconclusive. They are chiefly intended to show that the sense of sight in a child is developed earlier than the sense of touch, because a child recognises persons and objects by the sight, when his expertness in using his hands so as to acquire tactual ideas is still of the very lowest order. From this Mr. Bailey infers, or seems to infer, that the infant judges of objects by the sense of sight, before he has sensations of touch whereby to judge of them. It is singular that so able a thinker should not have adverted to the fact, that the child may experience sensations of touch from two sources, namely, either from the objects which he touches, or from those which touch him. A child six months old is not very skilful in handling objects so as to acquire an accurate notion of their distance and shape; but persons and things are continually touching the child, and seldom without his experiencing simultaneously some peculiar visual appearance. It cannot, therefore, be long before he associates at least those contacts which are pleasurable or painful, with the corresponding visual sensations; and when this association is formed, he will, on seeing the visual appearances, give signs of intelligence; not from recognising the object, for as an object there is not a shadow of proof that he yet recognises it, but simply because the sensation of sight excites the expectation of the accustomed pleasure or pain. That anything beyond this takes place in an infant's mind at an age at which it has not yet acquired tactual notions of distance and magnitude, Mr. Bailey has not proved, and would find it difficult to prove.

The facts relating to the young of the lower animals

are more to the point, and have been long felt to be a real stumbling-block in the way of the theory.

'It is manifest,' says Mr. Bailey, 'by the actions of many young animals, that they see external objects as soon as they are born, and before they can possibly have derived any assistance from their powers of touch or muscular feeling. The duckling makes to the water as soon as it has left its shell; the lamb moves about as soon as dropped; the young turtles and crocodiles, says Sir Humphry Davy, hatched without care of parents, run to the water; the crocodile bites at a stick, if it be presented to it, the moment it is hatched.' Again, 'Their running about, their snatching at objects presented to them as soon as born, their seeking the teats of the dam, their leaping from one spot to another with the greatest precision, all show not only that they can see objects to be at different distances, but that there is a natural consent of action between their limbs and their eyes; that they can proportion their muscular efforts to visible distances.'

It is asserted, and we know of no reason to doubt the fact, that chickens will pick up corn without difficulty as soon as they are hatched.

These are strong facts, and though we cannot confirm them from our own knowledge, still, as they are denied by no one, we presume they must be received as unquestionable. Some of the strongest adherents of Berkeley's doctrine, particularly Dugald Stewart and Brown, have felt compelled by these facts to allow, that, in many of the lower animals, the perception of distance by the eye is connate and instinctive. In this admission these philosophers saw no inconsistency, it being an acknowledged truth that brutes have many instincts, of which man is reduced to supply the place by acquired knowledge. Mr. Bailey, however, goes further, and says, here is

proof that the eye is at least an organ capable of a direct and intuitive perception of distance. Here, therefore, is at all events a complete refutation of Berkeley, who asserts that such a direct perception is organically impossible.

This is one of the passages which look as if our author had never quite settled with himself whether the 'perception of distance' by the eye is a real function of that organ, or is that very process of interpreting visible signs which Berkeley contends for, except that it is instinctive instead of being the result of experience. It is against the former hypothesis only that the argument of Berkeley, which Mr. Bailey refers to, is directed. To refute him, therefore, it would be necessary to show, not only that animals can distinguish distance as soon as they are born, but that they distinguish it by the sight itself, and not by interpretation of signs. Yet the other hypothesis is the one which, in order to treat our author fairly, we are obliged to suppose him to adopt.

If the eye of a brute is a different kind of organ from a human eye, there is no reasoning from one to the other: brutes may be capable of seeing distance and solidity, and yet this will be no reason for supposing that men are capable. But if in a brute, as in a man, it be a necessary condition of vision that an image corresponding to the object should be formed on the retina, then in a brute, as in a man, it is impossible that two lines should seem of unequal length, which are both alike represented on the retina by points. There will be no resource either in man or beast for judging of remoteness, except from difference in the degrees of brightness

and of visible magnitude; and the only doubt will be whether these natural signs are interpreted instinctively, or by virtue of previous experience.

Now if brutes have really an instinct for interpreting these appearances,—if they are intuitively capable of drawing, without experience, the inferences which experience would warrant—we allow it is physiologically probable that some vestige of a similar instinct exists in human beings; although, as in many other cases, the instinctive property, which might perhaps be observable in idiots, is overruled and superseded by the superior force of that rational faculty which grounds its judgments upon experience. But in truth, our knowledge of the mental operations of animals is too imperfect to enable us to affirm positively that they have this instinct. We know to a certain extent the external acts of animals, but know not from what inward promptings, or on what outward indications, those acts are performed. For example, as a judicious critic in the 'Spectator' newspaper has remarked, some of the motions which are supposed to show that young animals can see distance immediately after birth, are performed equally by those which are born blind; kittens and puppies seek the teat as well as calves and lambs. We are not aware if the experiment was ever tried whether a blind duckling will run to the water; it would not be more surprising than many facts in the history of the lower animals which are well known to be true. Those animals have to us an inexplicable facility both of finding and of selecting the objects which their wants require, without, as far as we can perceive, any sufficient opportunities of experience. But it is a question

which we should like to see examined by a good observer, to what extent it is their eyesight which guides them to the performance of these wonders. At all events, man has not these same facilities; man cannot build in hexagons by an instinctive faculty, though bees can.

We do not wish to evade a question which we are unable to solve, or to blink the fact that the case of the lower animals is the most serious difficulty which the theory of Berkeley has to encounter. But we maintain that it is a difficulty only, not a refutation; and that, even granting the full extent of what is contended for, the theory would still be practically true for human beings. Mr. Bailey allows that infants do not manifest that early perception of distance which some animals do; he imputes this, plausibly enough, to the comparative immaturity of their organs at the period of birth. But before the time when, according to him, the organs have attained sufficient maturity for manifesting this original power, experience has furnished impressions and formed associations, which, without supposing any such power, will account for all which the eyes can do in the way of observation; and there is ample evidence that our judgments of outward things from visual signs are practically, throughout life, regulated by these acquired associations.

The facts which relate to young children and the young of the lower animals being disposed of, there remain those derived from persons born blind, and relieved from blindness at a mature age. These, if well authenticated, would be the most valuable facts of all, for the human species. They exhibit to us, in

the very act of learning to see, not children or brutes, but persons capable of observing and describing their impressions, and whose judgments of objects from touch are already accurate and steady. It is a disagreeable reflection, to how great an extent these rare and valuable opportunities have been lost; how slightly and carelessly cases so interesting to science have been observed, and how scanty and insufficient is the information which has been recorded concerning them.

The best known case, that of the youth who was couched by Cheselden, has always been deemed strongly confirmatory of Berkeley's doctrine. Mr. Bailey has however attempted, we cannot think with any success, to maintain the contrary. Cheselden's patient said that all objects seemed to touch his eyes, as what he felt did his skin. There has been much discussion (in which our author takes an active part) as to what the boy may have meant by touching his eyes; we think quite needlessly. That the objects touched him was obviously a mere supposition, which he made because it was with his eyes that he perceived them. From his experience of touch, perception of an object and contact with it were, no doubt, indissolubly associated in his mind. But he would scarcely have said that all objects seemed to touch his eyes, if some of them had appeared farther off than others. The case, therefore, as far as anything can be concluded from one instance, seems to prove completely that we are at first incapable of seeing things at unequal distances. Our author curiously argues that the boy might have expressed himself as he did without regarding all visible objects as equally near;

for, says he, the boy compared his visual impressions to impressions of touch, and we do not consider all tangible objects as equally near. True, we do not; but if we were to say that all objects seemed simultaneously to touch our hand, it would require some ingenuity to reconcile this assertion with the fact that we were, at that very moment, perceiving them to be at different distances from it.

Another specimen of our author's power of explaining away evidence, is to be found in his remark, that in the whole of Cheselden's narrative

'There is nothing from which we can learn or infer—not a whisper of evidence to prove—that the boy's subsequent perceptions of visible distance had been acquired *by means of the touch.*'

What thinks Mr. Bailey of this passage, quoted by himself:—

'He knew not the shape of anything, nor any one thing from another, however different in shape or magnitude; but upon being told what things were, whose form he before knew from feeling, he would carefully observe, that he might know them again; but having too many objects to learn at once, he forgot many of them; and (as he said) at first he learned to know, and again forgot, a thousand things in a day. One particular only, though it may appear trifling, I will relate. Having often forgot which was the cat, and which the dog, he was ashamed to ask; but catching the cat (which he knew by feeling), he was observed to look at her steadfastly, and then, setting her down, said, 'So, puss, I shall know you another time.' '

Mr. Bailey will not wish to shelter himself under the subterfuge that the process of learning to see, which Cheselden here so graphically describes, has

reference to form only, and not to distance. Cheselden exhibits the boy actively engaged in teaching himself by the touch to judge of forms by the eye; and in this process he could not avoid learning also to judge of distances: much more rapidly, indeed, than of forms, the ideas concerned being much simpler.

After this example, the reader may dispense with our entering into the details of five other cases which our author discusses. Some of these cases are more, others less, favourable in appearance to Berkeley's theory; but, as our author himself remarks, they all bear evidence that the observers were not duly aware of the psychological difficulties of the problem. The point which Mr. Bailey most dwells on as conclusive in his favour, is that two of the patients could distinguish by the unassisted eye whether an object was brought nearer or carried farther from them. This, indeed, would be decisive of the question, if the experiments had been fair ones. But in one of these cases the patient was of mature years, and the trial not made till the eighteenth day after the operation, by which time a middle-aged woman might well have acquired the experience necessary for distinguishing so simple a phenomenon. In the other of the two cases, the patient, a boy seven years old, had been capable, before the operation, of distinguishing colours 'when they were very strong and held close to the eye;' and had probably, therefore, had the capacity of observing, antecedently to the operation, that colours grow fainter when the coloured object is removed further off.

On the whole, then, it will probably be the opinion of the philosophical reader, that neither by his facts

nor by his arguments has Mr. Bailey thrown any new light upon the question, but has left Berkeley's Theory precisely as he found it, subject, as it has always been, to the acknowledged difficulty arising from the motions of young animals, but otherwise unshaken, and to all appearance unshakeable.

Mr. Bailey having published a reply* to the preceding criticism, it is right to subjoin the following

REJOINDER TO MR. BAILEY'S REPLY.†

IN this pamphlet Mr. Bailey replies to our article of last October, and to a paper in Blackwood's Magazine on the same subject. Between Mr. Bailey and the writer in Blackwood we are not called upon to interfere. Of what he has said in answer to our own comments, our respect for him, as well as the scientific interest of the subject, compel us to take some notice; but we cannot venture to inflict upon our readers that detailed analysis of his arguments which would be necessary to satisfy him that we had duly considered them. We prefer resting our case on what we have already written, and on a comparison between that and what is offered in reply to it. We are really afraid lest in any attempt to state

* 'A Letter to a Philosopher, in Reply to some recent Attempts to vindicate 'Berkeley's Theory of Vision,' and in further Elucidation of its Unsoundness.'

† *Westminster Review*, May 1843.

the substance of Mr. Bailey's arguments, we should unwittingly leave out something which perhaps forms an essential part of them; so little do we feel capable of comprehending what it is which gives them the conclusiveness they possess in his eyes. And it is the more desirable that the reader should not take our word respecting Mr. Bailey's opinions, as it appears that on one important point we have, in sheer love of justice and courtesy to Mr. Bailey, misrepresented them.

We remarked that a dissentient from Berkeley's doctrine might adopt either of two theories; he might assert that we actually *see* distance, which is one doctrine; or he might admit that we only *infer* the distance of an object, from the diminution of its apparent size and apparent brilliancy, but might say that this inference is not made from experience, but by instinct or intuition. We surmised that Mr. Bailey was in a state of indecision between these two theories, but with a leaning towards the latter. In this it seems we were wrong, for he not only holds steadily to the former of the two doctrines, but finds it 'inexplicable how any one of honesty and intelligence' could so far misunderstand him as to imagine otherwise, 'except on the supposition of greater haste than was compatible with due examination.' We can assure Mr. Bailey that our mistake—since mistake it was—arose solely from an honest desire to do him justice. Of the two opinions, we, in all candour, attributed to him the one which appeared to us least unreasonable, and most difficult satisfactorily to refute. It would have abridged our labour very much if we had thought ourselves at liberty to ascribe to him the opinion he

now avows. That opinion we thought, and continue to think, palpably untenable, being inconsistent with admitted facts, while the other, from the nature of the case, can only be combated by negative evidence.

The notion that distance from the eye can be directly seen, needs, we conceive, no other refutation than Berkeley's. We can *see* nothing except in so far as it is represented on our retina; and things which are represented on our retina exactly alike, will be seen alike. The distances of all objects from the eye, being lines directed endwise to the retina, can only project themselves upon it by single points, that is to say, exactly alike; therefore they are seen exactly alike. This, which is Berkeley's argument, Mr. Bailey, in his pamphlet, disposes of by saying that it supposes the distances to be 'material or physical lines,' since 'imaginary or hypothetical lines can project no points on the retina.' We must again reiterate our fear of misrepresenting Mr. Bailey, for we can scarcely suppose him to mean (what he seems to say) that only *bodies* can be represented on the retina, and not the blank spaces between bodies; or else, that we indeed see bodies when, and only when, they are imaged on the retina, but see the spaces between them without any such optical equivalent. The fact surely is, that we see bodies and their distances by precisely the same mechanism. We see two stars, if they are imaged on the retina, and not otherwise; we see the interval between those stars, if there is an interval on the retina between the two images, and if there is no such interval we see it not. Now, as the interval between an object and our eye has not any interval

answering to it on the retina, we do not see it. Surely this argument does not depend upon an implied assumption that the intervals between objects are physical lines joining them.

This is Mr. Bailey's answer to one of our arguments. Whether he has succeeded any better in replying to the remainder of them, we must leave it to others to judge.

Mr. Bailey, in his reply, insists very much on a point which we passed over in our former article—the confirmation which he imagines his theory to derive from Mr. Wheatstone's discoveries respecting binocular vision, exhibited in the phenomena of the stereoscope. We think Mr. Bailey must admit, on further consideration, that these phenomena (as he himself says of Cheselden's observations)* are equally consistent with both theories. The stereoscope makes us see, or appear to see, solidity; it makes us look upon a flat picture of an object, and have, more

* See page 59 of the pamphlet. Without arguing this point with our author, we will, however, take note of an acknowledgment here made by him, which is of some importance. Although the boy couched by Cheselden could, according to Mr. Bailey, see distances, without any previous process of comparing his visual sensations with actual experience, Mr. Bailey admits that he still had to go through this very process of comparison before he could know that the distances which he saw corresponded with those he previously knew by touch. We do not wish to lay more stress upon this admission than belongs to it, but it seems to us very like a surrender of the whole question. If the boy did not at once perceive whether the distances he saw were or were not the same with those he already knew, then we do not really see distances. If we saw distances, we should not need to learn by experience what distances we saw. We should at once recognise an object to be at the distance we saw it at; and should confidently expect that the indications of touch would correspond. This expectation might be ill-grounded, for we might see the distances incorrectly, but then the result would be error; not perplexity, and inability to judge at all, as was the case with Cheselden's patient.

completely than we ever had before, the semblance of seeing the object in three dimensions. But how is this done? Merely by imitating on a plane, more exactly than was ever done before, the precise sensations of colour and visible form which we habitually have when a solid object, a body in three dimensions, is presented to us. The stereoscope produces a more complete illusion than a mere picture, because it does what no previous picture ever did—it allows for, and imitates, the two *different* sets of ocular appearances which we receive from an object very near to us when we look at it with both our eyes. If either theory could derive support from this experiment, it would surely be that which supposes our perceptions of solidity to be inferences rapidly drawn from visual impressions confined to two dimensions. But we do not insist upon this, as we deem the argument from pictures, in any of its forms, only valid to prove, not the truth of Berkeley's theory, but its sufficiency to explain the phenomena; or, as we before expressed it, that a solid *may*, not that it *must*, be seen originally as a plane.

In the course of his remarks, Mr. Bailey takes frequent opportunities of animadverting on the tone of our article, in a manner evincing at least as much sensitiveness to what he deems hostile criticism, as is at all compatible with the character of a philosopher. We were so entirely unconscious of having laid ourselves open to this kind of reproof, as to have flattered ourselves that the style and tone of our criticism on a single opinion of Mr. Bailey, bore indubitable marks of the unfeigned respect which we entertain for his general powers; nor are we aware of having shown

any other 'bluntness,' 'confidence,' or 'arrogance,' than are implied in thinking ourselves right, and, by consequence, Mr. Bailey wrong. We certainly did not feel ourselves required, by consideration for him, to state our difference of opinion with pretended hesitation. We should not have written on the subject unless we had been able to form a decided opinion on it; and, having done so, to have expressed that opinion otherwise than decidedly would have been cowardice, not modesty; it would have been sacrificing our conviction of truth to fear of offence. To dispute the soundness of a man's doctrines and the conclusiveness of his arguments, may always be interpreted as an assumption of superiority over him: true courtesy, however, between thinkers, is not shown by refraining from this sort of assumption, but by tolerating it in one another; and we claim from Mr. Bailey this tolerance, as we, on our part, sincerely and cheerfully concede to him the like.

MICHELET'S HISTORY OF FRANCE.*

IT has of late been a frequent remark among Continental thinkers, that the tendencies of the age set strongly in the direction of historical inquiry, and that history is destined to assume a new aspect from the genius and labours of the minds now devoted to its improvement. The anticipation must appear at least premature to an observer in England, confining his observation to his own country. Whatever may be the merits, in some subordinate respects, of such histories as the last twenty years have produced among us, they are in general distinguished by no essential character from the historical writings of the last century. No signs of a new school have been manifested in them; they will be affirmed by no one to constitute an era, or even prefigure the era which is to come: save that the 'shadow of its coming' rested for an instant on the lamented Dr. Arnold at the close of his career; while Mr. Carlyle has shown a signa example, in his 'French Revolution,' of the epic tone and pictorial colouring which may be given to literal truth, when materials are copious, and when the writer combines the laborious accuracy of a chronicler with the vivid imagination of a poet.

But whoever desires to know either the best which has been accomplished, or what the most advanced minds think it possible to accomplish, for the renova-

* *Edinburgh Review*, January 1844.

tion of historical studies, must look to the Continent; and by the Continent we mean, of course, in an intellectual sense, Germany and France. That there are historians in Germany, our countrymen have at last discovered. The first two volumes of Niebuhr's unfinished work, though the least attractive part to ordinary tastes, are said to have had more readers, or at least more purchasers, in English than in their native language. Of the remaining volume a translation has lately appeared, by a different, but a highly competent hand. Schlosser, if not read, has at least been heard of in England; and one of Ranke's works has been twice translated: we would rather that two of them had been translated once. But, though French books are supposed to be sufficiently legible in England without translation, the English public is not aware, that both in historical speculations, and in the importance of her historical writings, France, in the present day, far surpasses Germany. What reason induces the educated part of our countrymen to ignore, in so determined a manner, the more solid productions of the most active national mind in Europe, and to limit their French readings to M. de Balzac and M. Eugène Sue, there would be some difficulty in precisely determining. Perhaps it is the ancient dread of French infidelity; perhaps the ancient contempt of French frivolity and superficiality. If it be the former, we can assure them that there is no longer ground for such a feeling; if the latter, we must be permitted to doubt that there ever was. It is unnecessary to discuss whether, as some affirm, a strong religious 'revival' is taking place in France, and whether such a phenomenon, if real, is likely to

be permanent. There is at least a decided reaction against the irreligion of the last age. The Voltairian philosophy is looked upon as a thing of the past; one of its most celebrated assailants has been heard to lament that it has no living representative sufficiently considerable to perform the functions of a 'constitutional opposition' against the reigning philosophic doctrines. The present French thinkers, whether receiving Christianity or not as a divine revelation, in no way feel themselves called upon to be unjust to it as a fact in history. There are men who, not disguising their own unbelief, have written deeper and finer things in vindication of what religion has done for mankind, than have sufficed to found the reputation of some of its most admired defenders. If they have any historical prejudice on the subject, it is in favour of the priesthood. They leave the opinions of David Hume on ecclesiastical history to the exclusive patronage (we are sorry to say) of Protestant writers in Great Britain.

With respect to the charge so often made against French historians, of superficiality and want of research, it is a strange accusation against the country which produced the Benedictines. France has at all times possessed a class of studious and accurate *érudits*, as numerous as any other country except Germany; and her popular writers are not more superficial than our own. Voltaire gave false views of history in many respects, but not falser than Hume's; Thiers is inaccurate, but less so than Sir Walter Scott. France has done more for even English history than England has. The very first complete history of England, and to this day not wholly superseded by any other, was

the production of a French emigrant, Rapin de Thoyras. The histories and historical memoirs of the Commonwealth period, never yet collected in our own country, have been translated and published at Paris in an assembled form, under the superintendence of M. Guizot; to whom also we owe the best history, both in thought and in composition, of the times of Charles I. The reigns of the last two Stuarts have been written, with the mind of a statesman and the hand of a vigorous writer, by Armand Carrel, in his 'Histoire de la Contre-révolution en Angleterre;' and at greater length, with much research and many new facts, by M. Mazure. To call these writings, and numerous others which have lately appeared in France, superficial, would only prove an entire unacquaintance with them.

Among the French writers now labouring in the historical field, we must at present confine ourselves to those who have narrated as well as philosophized; who have written history, as well as written *about* history. Were we to include in our survey those general speculations which aim at connecting together the facts of universal history, we could point to some which we deem even more instructive, because of a more comprehensive and far-reaching character, than any which will now fall under our notice. Restricting ourselves, however, to historians in the received sense of the word, and among them to those who have done enough to be regarded as the chiefs and representatives of the new tendency, we should say that the three great historical minds of France, in our time, are Thierry, Guizot, and the writer whose name,

along with that of his most important production, stands at the beginning of the present article.

To assist our appreciation of these writers, and of the improved ideas on the use and study of history, which their writings exemplify and diffuse, we may observe that there are three distinct stages in historical inquiry.

The type of the first stage is Larcher, the translator of Herodotus, who, as remarked by Paul Louis Courier, carries with him to the durbar of Darius the phraseology of the Court of Louis Quatorze;* and,

* 'Figurez-vous un truchement qui, parlant au sénat de Rome pour le paysan du Danube, au lieu de ce début,

'Romains, et vous Sénat, assis pour m'écouter,'

commencerait: Messieurs, puisque vous me faites l'honneur de vouloir bien entendre votre humble serviteur, j'aurai celui de vous dire. . . . Voilà exactement ce que font les interprêtes d'Hérodote. La version de Larcher, pour ne parler que de celle qui est la plus connue, ne s'écarte jamais de cette civilité: on ne saurait dire que ce soit le laquais de Madame de Sévigné, auquel elle compare les traducteurs d'alors; car celui-là rendait dans son langage bas, le style de la cour, tandis que Larcher, au contraire, met en style de la cour ce qu'a dit l'homme d'Halicarnasse. Hérodote, dans Larcher, ne parle que de princes, de princesses, de seigneurs, et de gens de qualité; ces princes montent sur le trône, s'emparent de la couronne, ont une cour, des ministres et de grands officiers, faisant, comme on peut croire, le bonheur des sujets; pendant que les princesses, les dames de la cour, accordent leurs faveurs à ces jeunes seigneurs. Or est-il qu'Hérodote ne se doute jamais de ce que nous appelons princes, trône et couronne, ni de ce qu'à l'académie on nomme faveurs des dames et bonheur des sujets. Chez lui, les dames, les princesses mènent boire leurs vaches, ou celles du roi leur père, à la fontaine voisine, trouvent là des jeunes gens, et font quelque sottise, toujours exprimée dans l'auteur avec le mot propre: on est esclave ou libre, mais on n'est point sujet dans Hérodote. . . . Larcher ne nommera pas le boulanger de Crésus, le palefrenier de Cyrus, le chaudronnier Macistos; il dit grand panetier, écuyer, armurier, avertissant en note que cela est plus noble.'—*Prospectus d'une Traduction Nouvelle d'Hérodote, Œuvres de* P. L. Courier, iii. 262.

For another specimen, we may instance the Abbé Velly, the most popular writer of French history in the last century. We quote from M. Thierry's third Letter on the History of France:—

nowise behind him, an English translator of the Anabasis, who renders ἄνδρες στρατιῶται by 'gentlemen of the army.' The character of this school is to transport present feelings and notions back into the past, and refer all ages and forms of human life to the standard of that in which the writer himself lives. Whatever cannot be translated into the language of their own time, whatever they cannot represent to themselves by some fancied modern equivalent, is nothing to them, calls up no ideas in their minds at all. They cannot imagine any thing different from their

'S'agit-il d'exprimer la distinction que la conquête des barbares établissait entre eux et les vaincus, distinction grave et triste, par laquelle la vie d'un indigène n'était estimée, d'après le taux des amendes, qu'à la moitié du prix mis à celle de l'étranger, ce sont de pures préférences de cour, *les faveurs de nos rois* s'addressent surtout aux vainqueurs. S'agit-il de présenter le tableau de ces grandes assemblées, où tous les hommes de race Germanique se rendaient en armes, où chacun était consulté depuis le premier jusqu'au dernier; l'Abbé Velly nous parle d'une espèce de *parlement ambulatoire* et des *cours plénières*, qui étaient (après la chasse) *une partie des amusemens de nos rois*. 'Nos rois,' ajoute l'aimable abbé, 'ne se trouvèrent bientôt plus en état de donner ces superbes fêtes. On peut dire que le règne des Carlovingiens fut celui des cours plénières. . . . Il y eut cependant toujours des fêtes à la cour; mais, avec plus de galanterie, plus de politesse, plus de goût, on n'y retrouva ni cette grandeur ni cette richesse.'

''Hilderic,' dit Grégoire de Tours, 'regnant sur la nation des Franks et se livrant à une extrême dissolution, se prit à abuser de leurs filles; et eux, indignés de cela, le destituèrent de la royauté. Informé, en outre, qu'ils voulaient le mettre à mort, il partit et s'en alla en Thuringe.' Ce récit est d'un écrivain qui vivait un siècle après l'événement. Voici maintenant les paroles de l'Abbé Velly, qui se vante, dans sa préface, de puiser aux sources anciennes, et de peindre exactement les mœurs, les usages, et les coutumes: 'Childéric fut un prince à grandes aventures; . . . . c'était l'homme le mieux fait de son royaume. Il avait de l'esprit, du courage; mais, né avec un cœur tendre, il s'abandonnait trop à l'amour: ce fut la cause de sa perte. Les seigneurs Français, aussi sensibles à l'outrage que leurs femmes l'avaient été aux charmes de ce prince, se liguèrent pour le détrôner. Contraint de céder à leur fureur, il se retira en Allemagne.''

own everyday experience. They assume that words mean the same thing to a monkish chronicler as to a modern member of parliament. If they find the term *rex* applied to Clovis or Clotaire, they already talk of 'the French monarchy,' or 'the kingdom of France.' If among a tribe of savages newly escaped from the woods, they find mention of a council of leading men, or an assembled multitude giving its sanction to some matter of general concernment, their imagination jumps to a system of free institutions, and a wise contrivance of constitutional balances and checks. If, at other times, they find the chief killing and plundering without this sanction, they just as promptly figure to themselves an acknowledged despotism. In this manner they antedate not only modern ideas, but the essential characters of the modern mind; and imagine their ancestors to be very like their next neighbours, saving a few eccentricities, occasioned by being still Pagans or Catholics, by having no *habeas corpus* act, and no Sunday schools. If an historian of this stamp takes a side in controversy, and passes judgment upon actions or personages that have figured in history, he applies to them in the crudest form the canons of some modern party or creed. If he is a Tory, and his subject is Greece, everything Athenian must be cried down, and Philip and Dionysius must be washed white as snow, lest Pericles and Demosthenes should not be sufficiently black. If he be a Liberal, Cæsar and Cromwell, and all usurpers similar to them, are 'damned to everlasting fame.' Is he a disbeliever of revelation? a short-sighted, narrow-minded Julian becomes his pattern of a prince, and the heroes and martyrs of Christianity objects of scornful pity. If

he is of the Church of England, Gregory VII. must be an ambitious impostor, because Leo X. was a self-indulgent voluptuary; John Knox nothing but a coarse-minded fanatic, because the historian does not like John Wesley. Humble as our estimate must be of this kind of writers, it would be unjust to forget that even *their* mode of treating history is an improvement upon the uninquiring credulity which contented itself with copying or translating the ancient authorities, without ever bringing the writer's own mind in contact with the subject. It is better to conceive Demosthenes even under the image of Anacharsis Clootz, than not as a living being at all, but a figure in a puppet-show, of which Plutarch is the showman; and Mitford, so far, is a better historian than Rollin. He does give a sort of reality to historical personages: he ascribes to them passions and purposes, which, though not those of their age or position, are still human; and enables us to form a tolerably distinct, though in general an exceedingly false notion of their qualities and circumstances. This is a first step; and, that step made, the reader, once in motion, is not likely to stop there.

Accordingly, the second stage of historical study attempts to regard former ages not with the eye of a modern, but, as far as possible, with that of a cotemporary; to realize a true and living picture of the past time, clothed in its circumstances and peculiarities. This is not an easy task: the knowledge of any amount of dry generalities, or even of the practical life and business of his own time, goes a very little way to qualify a writer for it. He needs some of the characteristics of the poet. He has to 'body forth

the forms of things unknown.' He must have the faculty to see, in the ends and fragments which are preserved of some element of the past, the consistent whole to which they once belonged; to discern, in the individual fact which some monument hands down or to which some chronicler testifies, the general, and for that very reason unrecorded, facts which it presupposes. Such gifts of imagination he must possess; and, what is rarer still, he must forbear to abuse them. He must have the conscience and self-command to affirm no more than can be vouched for, or deduced by legitimate inference from what is vouched for. With the genius for producing a great historical romance, he must have the virtue to add nothing to what can be proved to be true. What wonder if so rare a combination is not often realized?

Realized, of course, in its ideal perfection, it never is; but many now aim at it, and some approach it, according to the measure of their faculties. Of the sagacity which detects the meaning of small things, and drags to light the forgotten elements of a gone-by state of society, from scattered evidences which the writers themselves who recorded them did not understand, the world has now, in Niebuhr, an imperishable model. The reproduction of past events in the colours of life, and with all the complexity and bustle of a real scene, can hardly be carried to a higher pitch than by Mr. Carlyle. But to find a school of writers, and among them several of the first rank, who systematically direct their aims towards this ideal of history, we must look to the French historians of the present day.

There is yet a third, and the highest stage of his-

torical investigation, in which the aim is not simply to compose histories, but to construct a science of history. In this view, the whole of the events which have befallen the human race, and the states through which it has passed, are regarded as a series of phenomena, produced by causes, and susceptible of explanation. All history is conceived as a progressive chain of causes and effects; or (by an apter metaphor) as a gradually unfolding web, in which every fresh part that comes to view is a prolongation of the part previously unrolled, whether we can trace the separate threads from the one into the other, or not. The facts of each generation are looked upon as one complex phenomenon, caused by those of the generation preceding, and causing, in its turn, those of the next in order. That these states must follow one another according to some law, is considered certain: how to read that law, is deemed the fundamental problem of the science of history. To find on what principles, derived from the nature of man and the laws of the outward world, each state of society and of the human mind produced that which came after it; and whether there can be traced any order of production sufficiently definite, to show what future states of society may be expected to emanate from the circumstances which exist at present—is the aim of historical philosophy in its third stage.

This ultimate and highest attempt, must, in the order of nature, follow, not precede, that last described; for before we can trace the filiation of states of society one from another, we must rightly understand and clearly conceive them, each apart from the rest. Accordingly, this greatest achieve-

ment is rather a possibility to be one day realized, than an enterprise in which any great progress has yet been made. But of the little yet done in this direction, by far the greater part has hitherto been done by French writers. They have made more hopeful attempts than any one else, and have more clearly pointed out the path: they are the real harbingers of the dawn of historical science.

Dr. Arnold, in his 'Historical Lectures'—which, (it should not be forgotten,) though the latest production of his life, were the earliest of his systematic meditations on *general* history—showed few and faint symptoms of having conceived, with any distinctness, this third step in historical study. But he had, as far as the nature of the work admitted, completely realized the second stage; and to those who have not yet attained that stage, there can scarcely be more instructive reading than his Lectures. The same praise must be given, in an even higher sense, to the earliest of the three great modern French historians, M. Augustin Thierry.

It was from historical romances that M. Thierry learned to recognise the worthlessness of what in those days were called histories; Chateaubriand and Sir Walter Scott were his early teachers. He has himself described the effect produced upon him and others, by finding, in 'Ivanhoe,' Saxons and Normans in the reign of Richard I. Why, he asked himself, should the professed historians have left such a fact as this to be brought to light by a novelist? and what else were such men likely to have understood of the age, when so important and distinctive a feature of it had escaped them? The study of the

original sources of French history, completed his conviction of the senselessness of the modern compilers. He resolved 'to plant the standard of historical reform;' and to this undertaking all his subsequent life has been consecrated. His 'History of the Norman Conquest,' though justly chargeable with riding a favourite idea too hard, forms an era in English history. In another of his works, the 'Lettres sur l'Histoire de France,' in which profound learning is combined with that clear practical insight into the realities of life, which in France, more than in any other country except Italy, accompanies speculative eminence, M. Thierry gives a *piquant* exposure of the incapacity of historians to enter into the spirit of the middle ages, and the ludicrously false impressions they communicate of human life as it was in early times. Exemplifying the right method as well as censuring the wrong, he, in the same work, extracted from the records of the middle ages some portions, not large but valuable, of the neglected facts which constitute the real history of European society. Nowhere, however, is M. Thierry's genius so pleasingly displayed, as in his most recent publication, the work of his premature old age, written under the double affliction of blindness and paralysis—the 'Récits des Temps Mérovingiens.' This book, the first series of which is all that has been published, was destined to paint—what till that time he had only discussed and described—that chaos of primitive barbarism and enervated civilization, from which the present nations of Europe had their origin, and which forms the transition from ancient to modern history. He makes the age tell its own story; not drawing

anything from invention, but adhering scrupulously to authentic facts. As the history of the three centuries preceding Charlemagne was not worth writing throughout in fulness of detail, he contents himself with portions of it, selecting such as, while they are illustrative of the times, are also in themselves complete stories, furnished with characters and personal interest. The experiment is completely successful. The grace and beauty of the narration makes these true histories as pleasant reading as if they were a charming collection of fictitious tales; while the practical feeling they impart of the form of human life from which they are drawn—the familiar understanding they communicate of 'la vie barbare,'—is unexampled even in fiction, and unthought of heretofore in any writing professedly historical. The narratives are preceded by an improved *résumé* of the author's previous labours in the theoretical department of his subject, under the title of a 'Dissertation on the Progress of Historical Studies in France.'

M. Guizot has a mind of a different cast from M. Thierry: the one is especially a man of speculation and science, as the other is, more emphatically, in the high European sense of the term, an artist; though this is not to be understood of either in an exclusive sense, each possessing a fair share of the qualities characteristic of the other. Of all Continental historians of whom we are aware, M. Guizot is the one best adapted to this country, and a familiarity with whose writings would do most to train and ripen among us the growing spirit of historical speculation.

M. Guizot's only narrative work is the unfinished

history, already referred to, of what is called in France the English Revolution. His principal productions are the 'Essais sur l'Histoire de France,' published in 1822, and the Lectures, which the whole literary public of Paris thronged to hear, from 1828 to 1830, and to which, as well as to his English history, the political events of the last of those years put an abrupt termination. The immense popularity of these writings in their own country—a country not more patient of the 'genre ennuyeux' than its neighbours—is a sufficient guarantee that their wearing the form of dissertation, and not of narrative, is, in this instance, no detriment to their attractiveness. Even the light reader will find in them no resemblance to the chapters on 'manners and customs,' which, with pardonable impatience, he is accustomed to skip when turning over any of the historians of the old school. For in them we find only that dullest and most useless of all things, mere facts without ideas: M. Guizot creates within those dry bones a living soul.

M. Guizot does not, as in the main must be said of M. Thierry, remain in what we have called the second region of historical inquiry: he makes frequent and long incursions into the third. He not only inquires what our ancestors were, but what made them so; what gave rise to the peculiar state of society of the middle ages, and by what causes this state was progressively transformed into what we see around us. His success in this respect could not, in the almost nascent state of the science of history, be perfect; but it is as great as was perhaps compatible with the limits of his design. For (as M. Comte has well remarked)

in the study of history, we must proceed from the *ensemble* to the details, and not conversely. We cannot explain the facts of any age or nation, unless we have first traced out some connected view of the main outline of history. The great universal results must be first accounted for, not only because they are the most important, but because they depend on the simplest laws. Taking place on so large a scale as to neutralize the operation of local and partial agents, it is in them alone that we see in undisguised action the inherent tendencies of the human race. Those great results, therefore, may admit of a complete theory; while it would be impossible to give a full analysis of the innumerable causes which influenced the local or temporary development of some section of mankind; and even a distant approximation to it supposes a previous understanding of the general laws, to which these local causes stand in the relation of modifying circumstances.

But before astronomy had its Newton, there was a place, and an honourable one, for not only the observer Tycho, but the theorizer, Kepler. M. Guizot is the Kepler, and something more, of his particular subject. He has a real talent for the explanation and generalization of historical facts. He unfolds at least the proximate causes of social phenomena, with rare discernment, and much knowledge of human nature. We recognise, moreover, in all his theories, not only a solidity of acquirements, but a sobriety and impartiality, which neither his countrymen, nor speculative thinkers in general, have often manifested in so high a degree. He does not exaggerate the influence of some one cause or agency, sacrificing all others to it.

He neither writes as if human affairs were absolutely moulded by the wisdom and virtue or the vices and follies of rulers; nor as if the general circumstances of society did all, and accident or eminent individuals could do nothing. He neither attributes everything to political institutions, nor everything to the ideas and convictions in men's minds; but shows how they both co-operate, and react upon one another. He sees in European civilization the complex product of many conflicting influences, Germanic, Roman, and Christian; and of the peculiar position in which these different forces were brought to act upon one another. He ascribes to each of them its share of influence. Whatever may be added to his speculations in a more advanced state of historical science, little that he has done, will, we think, require to be undone; his conclusions are seldom likely to be found in contradiction with the deeper or more extensive results that may, perhaps, hereafter be obtained.

It speaks little for the intellectual tastes and the liberal curiosity of our countrymen, that they remain ignorant or neglectful of such writings. The Essays we have seldom met with an Englishman who had read. Of the Lectures, one volume has been twice translated, and has had some readers, especially when M. Guizot's arrival in England as the representative of his country, obtruded (as Dr. Chalmers would say) a knowledge of his existence and character upon London society. But the other five volumes are untranslated and unread, although they are the work itself, to which the first volume is, in truth, only the introduction. When the Villèle Ministry was overthrown, and the interdict removed by which the

Government of the Restoration had chained up all independent speculation, M. Guizot reopened his lecture-room, after a suspension of near ten years. Half the academic season having then expired, he was compelled, not only to restrict his view of modern history to the merest outline, but to leave out half the subject altogether; treating only of the progress of Society, and reserving for the more extended labours of subsequent years, the development of the individual human being. Yet critics have been found in England, who, in entire ignorance that the volume before them was a mere preface, visited upon the author, as shortcomings in his own doctrines, the *lacunæ* unavoidably left in his first year's lectures, and amply filled up in those of the succeeding seasons;—charging upon him as a grave philosophical error, that he saw in history only institutions and social relations, and altogether overlooked human beings.

What has obtained for the introductory volume the share of attention with which it (and not the others) has been treated by the English public, is perhaps that it bears as its second title, 'History of Civilization in Europe;' while the other volumes, after the words 'Cours d'Histoire Moderne,' bear the designation of 'Histoire de la Civilisation en *France*,' and as such may have been deemed not specially interesting to England. But though this may avail in explanation, it is inadmissible as an excuse. A person must need instruction in history very much, who does not know that the history of civilization in France *is* that of civilization in Europe. The main course of the stream of civilization is identical in all the western nations; their origin was essentially

similar—they went through the same phases—and society in all of them, at least until after the Reformation, consisted fundamentally of the same elements. Any one country, therefore, may, in some measure, stand for all the rest. But France is the best type, as representing best the average circumstances of Europe. There is no country in which the general tendencies of modern society have been so little interfered with by secondary and modifying agencies. In England, for example, much is to be ascribed to the peculiarity of a double conquest. While elsewhere one race of barbarians overran an extensive region, and settled down amidst a subject population greatly more numerous, as well as more civilized, than themselves; the first invaders of England, instead of enslaving, exterminated or expelled the former inhabitants; and after growing up into a nation, were in their turn subdued by a race almost exactly on a level with them in civilization. The Scandinavian countries, on the other hand, and a great part of Germany, had never been conquered at all; and in the latter, much depended upon the elective character of the head of the empire, which prevented the consolidation of a powerful central government. In Italy, the early predominance of towns and town life; in Spain, the Moorish occupation and its consequences, coexisted as modifying causes with the general circumstances common to all. But in France, no disturbing forces, of anything like equal potency, can be traced; and the universal tendencies, having prevailed more completely, are more obviously discernible.

To any European, therefore, the history of France

is not a foreign subject, but part of his national history. Nor is there anything partial or local in M. Guizot's treatment of it. He draws his details and exemplifications from France; but his principles are universal. The social conditions and changes which he delineates, were not French, but European. The intellectual progress which he retraces, was the progress of the European mind.

A similar remark applies to the 'History of France,' by M. Michelet, the third great French historian of the present era—a work which, even in its unfinished state, is the most important that he has produced, and of which it is now time that we should begin to give an account.

M. Michelet has, among the writers of European history, a position peculiarly his own.

Were we to say that M. Michelet is altogether as safe a writer as M. Thierry or M. Guizot—that his interpretations of history may be accepted as actual history—that those who dislike to think or explore for themselves, may sleep peacefully in the faith that M. Michelet has thought and explored for them—we should give him a different kind of praise from that which we consider his due: M. Michelet's are not books to save a reader the trouble of thinking, but to make him boil over with thought. Their effect on the mind is not acquiescence, but stir and ferment.

M. Michelet has opened a new vein in the history of the middle ages. A pupil of M. Guizot, or at least an admiring auditor, who has learned from him most of what he had to teach, M. Michelet, for this very reason, has not followed in his wake, but con-

sulted the bent of his own faculties, which prompted him to undertake precisely what M. Guizot had left undone. Of him it would be very unlikely to be said, even falsely, that he thought only of society. Without overlooking society, man is his especial subject. M. Guizot has neglected neither, but has treated them both conformably to the character of his own mind. He is himself two things—a statesman and a speculative thinker; and in his Lectures, when he leaves the province of the statesman, it is for that of the metaphysician. His history of the human mind is principally the history of speculation. It is otherwise with M. Michelet. His peculiar element is that of the poet, as his countrymen would say—of the religious man, as would be said in a religious age—in reality, of both. Not the intellectual life of intellectual men, not the social life of the people, but their internal life; their thoughts and feelings in relation to themselves and their destination; the habitual temper of their minds—not overlooking, of course, their external circumstances. He concerns himself more with masses than with literary individuals, except as specimens, on a larger scale, of what was in the general heart of their age. His chief interest is for the collective mind, the everyday plebeian mind of humanity—its enthusiasms, its collapses, its strivings, its attainments and failures. He makes us feel with its sufferings, rejoice in its hopes. He makes us identify ourselves with the varying fortunes and feelings of human nature, as if mankind or Christendom were one being, the single and indivisible hero of a tale.

M. Michelet had afforded an earnest of these quali-

ties in his former writings. He has written a history of the Roman Republic, in which he availed himself largely, as all writers on Roman history now do, of the new views opened by the profound sagacity of Niebuhr. One thing, however, he has not drawn from Niebuhr; for Niebuhr had it not to bestow. We have no right to require that an author, who has done in his department great things which no one before him had done, or could do, should have done all other good things likewise. But without meaning disparagement to Niebuhr, it has always struck us as remarkable, that a mind so fitted to throw light upon the dark places in the Roman manner of existence, should have exhausted its efforts in clearing up and rendering intelligible the merely civic life of the Roman people. By the aid of Niebuhr, we now know, better than we had ever reckoned upon knowing, what the Roman republic was. But what the Romans themselves were, we scarcely know better than we did before. It is true that citizenship, its ideas, feelings, and active duties, filled a larger space in ancient, than in any form of modern life; but they did not constitute the whole. A Roman citizen had a religion and gods, had a religious morality, had domestic relations; there were women in Rome as well as men; there were children, who were brought up and educated in a certain manner; there were, even in the earliest period of the Roman commonwealth, slaves. Of all this, one perceives hardly anything in Niebuhr's voluminous work. The central idea of the Roman religion and polity, the family, scarcely shows itself, except in connexion with the classification of the citizens; nor are we made to perceive in what the beliefs and modes of

conduct of the Romans, respecting things in general, agreed, and in what disagreed, with those of the rest of the ancient world. Yet the mystery of the Romans and of their fortunes must lie there. Now, of many of these things, one does learn something from the much smaller work of M. Michelet. In imaging to ourselves the relation in which a Roman stood, not to his fellow-citizens as such, but to the universe, we gain some help from Michelet—next to none from Niebuhr. The work before us has, in a still greater degree, a similar merit. Without neglecting the outward condition of mankind, but on the contrary throwing much new light upon it, he tells us mainly their inward mental workings. Others have taught us as much of how mankind acted at each period, but no one makes us so well comprehend how they felt. He is the subjective historian of the middle ages.

For his book, at least in the earlier volumes, is a history of the middle ages, quite as much as of France; and he has aimed at giving us, not the dry husk, but the spirit of those ages. This had never been done before in the same degree, not even by his eminent precursor, Thierry, except for the period of the Germanic invasions. The great value of the book is, that it does, to some extent, make us understand what was really passing in the collective mind of each generation. For, in assuming distinctness, the life of the past assumes also variety under M. Michelet's hands. With him, each period has a physiognomy and a character of its own. It is in reading him that we are made to feel distinctly, how many successive conditions of humanity, and states of the human mind, are habitually confounded under the appellation

of the Middle Ages. To common perception, those times are like a distant range of mountains, all melted together into one cloudlike barrier. To M. Michelet, they are like the same range on a nearer approach, resolved into its separate mountain masses, with sloping sides overlapping one another, and gorges opening between them.

The spirit of an age is a part of its history which cannot be extracted literally from ancient records, but must be distilled from those arid materials by the chemistry of the writer's own mind; and whoever attempts this, will expose himself to the imputation of substituting imagination for facts, writing history by divination, and the like. These accusations have been often brought against M. Michelet, and we will not take upon ourselves to say that they are never just; we think he is not seldom the dupe of his own ingenuity. But it is a mistake to suppose that a man of genius will be oftener wrong, in his views of history, than a dull unimaginative proser. Not only are the very errors of the one more instructive than the commonplaces of the other, but he commits fewer of them. It by no means follows, that he who cannot see so far as another, must, therefore, see more correctly. To be incapable of discerning what is, gives no exemption from believing what is not; and there is no perversion of history by persons who think, equal to those daily committed by writers who never rise to the height of an original idea.

It is true, a person of lively apprehension and fertile invention, relying on his sagacity, may neglect the careful study of original documents. But M. Michelet is a man of deep erudition, and extensive

research. He has a high reputation among the French learned for his industry; while his official position, which connects him with the archives of the kingdom, has given him access to a rich source of unexplored authorities, of which he has made abundant use in his later volumes, and which promise to be of still greater importance in those yet to come. Even in its mere facts, therefore, this history is considerably in advance of all previously written. That his accuracy is not vulnerable in any material point, may be believed on the authority of the sober and right-minded Thierry, who, in the preface to the Récits, in a passage where, though Michelet is not named, he is evidently pointed at, blames his method as a dangerous one, but acquits M. Michelet himself as having been saved by 'conscientious studies' from the errors into which his example is likely to betray young writers. The carefulness of his investigations has been impugned on minor points. An English Review has made a violent attack upon his account of Boniface VIII.; and, from his references (which are always copious) it does not appear that he had consulted the Italian authorities on whom the reviewer relies. But it is hard to try an historian by the correctness of his details in incidents only collaterally connected with his subject. We ourselves perceive that he sometimes trusts to memory, and is inaccurate in trifles; but the true question is—Has he falsified the essential character of any of the greater events of the time about which he writes? If he has not, but on the contrary, has placed many of those events in a truer light, and rendered their character more intelligible, than any former historian, to rectify his small

mistakes will be a very fitting employment for those who have the necessary information, and nothing more important to do.

The History, though a real narrative, not a dissertation, is, in all its earlier parts, a greatly abridged one. The writer dwells only on the great facts which paint their period, or on things which it appears to him necessary to present in a new light. As, in his progress, however, he came into contact with his new materials, his design has extended; and the fourth and fifth volumes, embracing the confused period of the wars of Edward III. and Henry V., contain, though in a most condensed style, a tolerably minute recital of events. It is impossible for us to make any approach to an abstract of the contents of so large a work. We must be satisfied with touching cursorily upon some of the passages of history, on which M. Michelet's views are the most original, or otherwise most deserving of notice.

In the first volume, he is on ground which had already been broken and well turned over by M. Thierry. But some one was still wanting who should write the history of the time, in a connected narrative, from M. Thierry's point of view. M. Michelet has done this, and more. He has not only understood, like his predecessor, the character of the age of transition, in which the various races, conquered and conquering, were mixed on French soil without being blended; but he has endeavoured to assign to the several elements of that confused mixture, the share of influence which belongs to them over the subsequent destinies of his country.

It was natural that a subjective historian, one who

looks, above all, to the internal moving forces of human affairs, should attach great historical importance to the consideration of Races. This subject, on British soil, has usually fallen into hands little competent to treat it soberly, or on true principles of induction; but of the great influence of Race in the production of national character, no reasonable inquirer can now doubt. As far as history, and social circumstances generally, are concerned, how little resemblance can be traced between the French and the Irish—in national character, how much! The same ready excitability; the same impetuosity when excited, yet the same readiness under excitement to submit to the severest discipline—a quality which at first might seem to contradict impetuosity, but which arises from that very vehemence of character with which it appears to conflict, and is equally conspicuous in Revolutions of Three Days, temperance movements, and meetings on the Hill of Tara. The same sociability and demonstrativeness—the same natural refinement of manners, down to the lowest rank—in both, the characteristic weakness an inordinate vanity, their more serious moral deficiency the absence of a sensitive regard for truth. Their ready susceptibility to influences, while it makes them less steady in right, makes them also less pertinacious in wrong, and renders them, under favourable circumstances of culture, reclaimable and improvable (especially through their more generous feelings) in a degree to which the more obstinate races are strangers. To what, except their Gaelic blood, can we ascribe all this similarity between populations, the whole course of whose national history has been so different?

We say Gaelic, not Celtic, because the Kymri of Wales and Bretagne, though also called Celts, and notwithstanding a close affinity in language, have evinced throughout history, in many respects, an opposite type of character; more like the Spanish Iberians than either the French or Irish: individual instead of gregarious, tough and obstinate instead of impressible—instead of the most disciplinable, one of the most intractable Races among mankind.

Historians who preceded M. Michelet had seen chiefly the Frankish, or the Roman element, in the formation of modern France. M. Michelet calls attention to the Gaelic element. 'The foundation of the French people,' he says,* 'is the youthful, soft, and mobile race of the Gaels, *bruyante*, sensual, and *légère;* prompt to learn, prompt to despise, greedy of new things.' To the ready impressibility of this race, and the easy reception it gave to foreign influences, he attributes the progress made by France. 'Such children require severe preceptors. They will meet with such, both from the south and from the north. Their mobility will be fixed, their softness hardened and strengthened. Reason must be added to instinct, reflection to impulse.'

It is certain that no people, in a semi-barbarous state, ever received a foreign civilization more rapidly than the French Celts. In a century after Julius Cæsar, not only the south, the *Gallia Narbonensis*, but the whole east of Gaul, from Treves and Cologne southwards, were already almost as Roman as Italy itself. The Roman institutions and ideas took a deeper root in Gaul than in any other province of

* Vol. i. p. 129.

the Roman empire, and remained long predominant, wherever no great change was effected in the population by the ravages of the invaders. But, along with this capacity of improvement, M. Michelet does not find in the Gauls that voluntary loyalty of man to man, that free adherence, founded on confiding attachment, which was characteristic of the Germanic tribes, and of which, in his opinion, the feudal relation was the natural result. It is to these qualities, to personal devotedness and faith in one another, that he ascribes the universal success of the Germanic tribes in overpowering the Celtic. He finds already in the latter the root of that passion for equality which distinguishes modern France; and which, when unbalanced by a strong principle of sympathetic union, has always, he says, prevented the pure Celts from becoming a nation. Everywhere among the Celts, he finds equal division of inheritances, while in the Germanic races primogeniture easily established itself—an institution which, in a rude state of society, he justly interprets as equivalent to the permanence of the household, the non-separation of families.

We think that M. Michelet has here carried the influence of Race too far, and that the difference is better explained by diversity of position, than by diversity of character in the Races. The conquerors, a small body scattered over a large territory, could not sever their interests, could not relax the bonds which held them together. They were for many generations encamped in the country, rather than settled in it; they were a military band, requiring a military discipline, and the separate members could not venture to detach themselves from each other, or

from their chief. Similar circumstances would have produced similar results among the Gauls themselves. They were by no means without something analogous to the German *comitatus* (as the voluntary bond of adherence, of the most sacred kind, between followers and a leader of their choice, is called by the Roman historians). The *devoti* of the Gauls and Aquitanians, mentioned by M. Michelet himself, on the authority of Cæsar* and Athenæus, were evidently not clansmen. Some such relation may be traced in many other warlike tribes. We find it even among the most obstinately personal of all the races of antiquity, the Iberians of Spain; witness the Roman Sertorius and his Spanish body-guard, who slew themselves, to the last man, before his funeral pile. 'Ce principe d'attachement à un chef, ce dévouement personnel, cette religion de l'homme envers l'homme,'† is thus by no means peculiar to the Teutonic races. And our author's favourite idea of the 'profonde impersonnalité'‡ inherent in the Germanic genius, though we are far from saying that there is no foundation for it, surely requires some limitation. It will hardly, for example, be held true of the English, yet the English are a Germanic people. They, indeed, have rather (or at least had) the characteristic which M. Michelet predicates of the Celts (thinking apparently rather of the Kymri than of the Gaels), 'le

* Aducantanus, qui summam imperii tenebat, cum DC devotis, quos illi soldurios appellant: quorum hæc est conditio, uti omnibus in vita commodis una cum his fruantur quorum se amicitiæ dediderint: si quid iis per vim accidat, aut eundem casum una ferant, aut sibi mortem consciscant: neque adhuc hominum memoria repertus est quisquam, qui, eo interfecto cujus se amicitiæ devovisset, mori recusaret.—*De Bello Gallico*, iii. 22.

† Michelet, vol. i. p. 168. ‡ Ib. p. 171.

génie de la personnalité libre;' a tendency to revolt against compulsion, to hold fast to their own, and assert the claims of individuality against those of society and authority. But though many of M. Michelet's speculations on the characteristics of Races appear to us contestable, they are always suggestive of thought. The next thing to having a question solved, is to have it well raised. M. Michelet's are views by which a thinker, even if he rejects them, seldom fails to profit.

From the Races, our author passes to the provinces, which, by their successive aggregation, composed the French monarchy. France is, in the main, peopled by a mixed race; but it contains several populations of pure race at its remoter extremities. It includes several distinct languages, and above all a great variety of climate, soil, and situation. Next to hereditary organization (if not beyond it), geographical peculiarities have a more powerful influence than any other natural agency, in the formation of national character. Any one, capable of such speculations, will read with strong interest the review of the various provinces of France, which occupies the first hundred and thirty pages of our author's second volume. In this brilliant sketch, he surveys the local circumstances and national peculiarities of each province, and compares them with the type of character which belongs to its inhabitants, as shown in the history of each province, in the eminent individuals who have sprung from it, and in the results of intelligent personal observation even in the present day. We say *even*, because M. Michelet is not unaware of the tendency of provincial and local peculiarities to disap-

pear. A strenuous asserter of the power of mind over matter, of will over spontaneous propensities, culture over nature, he holds that local characteristics lose their importance as history advances. In a rude age the 'fatalities' of race and geographical position are absolute. In the progress of society, human forethought and purpose, acting by means of uniform institutions and modes of culture, tend more and more to efface the pristine differences. And he attributes, in no small degree, the greatness of France to the absence of any marked local peculiarities in the predominant part of her population. Paris, and an extensive region all round—from the borders of Brittany to the eastern limits of Champagne, from the northern extremity of Picardy to the mountains of Auvergne—is distinguished by no marked natural features; and its inhabitants—a more mixed population than any other in France—have no distinct, well-defined individuality of character. This very deficiency, or what might seem so, makes them the ready recipients of ideas and modes of action from all sides, and qualifies them to bind together heterogeneous populations in harmonious union, by receiving the influence and assuming the character of each, as far as may be, without exclusion of the rest. In those different populations (on the other hand), M. Michelet finds an abundant variety of provincial characteristics, of all shades and degrees, up to those obstinate individualities which cling with the tenacity of iron to their own usages, and yield only after a long and dogged resistance to the general movement of humanity. In these portraits of the provinces there is much to admire, and occasionally something to

startle. The form and vesture are more poetical than philosophical; the sketch of Brittany wants only verse to be a fine poem. But, though fancifully expressed, there is in this survey of France much more which seems, than which is, fanciful. There is, as we believe, for much, if not most of it, a foundation of sober reason; and out of its poetry we could extract an excellent treatise in unexceptionable prose, did not our limits admonish us to hurry to those parts of the work which are of more universal interest.

From this place the book becomes a picture of the middle ages, in a series of *Tableaux*. The facts are not delivered in the dry form of chronological annals, but are grouped round a certain number of central figures or leading events, selected so that each half century has at least one *Tableau* belonging to it. The groups, we need scarcely add, represent the mind of the age, not its mere outward physiognomy and costume. The successive titles of the chapters will form an appropriate catalogue to this new kind of historical picture gallery:—

'Chap. I. The year 1000 — The French King and the French Pope, Robert and Gerbert—Feudal France.—II. Eleventh Century—Gregory VII—Alliance between the Normans and the Church—Conquests of Naples and England.—III. The Crusade.—IV. Consequences of the Crusade—The Communes—Abailard—First half of the Twelfth Century.—V. The King of France and the King of England, Louis-le-Jeune and Henry Plantagenet—Second Crusade—Humiliation of Louis — Thomas Becket — Humiliation of Henry.—VI. The year 1100—Innocent III—The Pope, by the arms of the Northern French, prevails over the King of England and the Emperor of Germany, the Greek Empire and the Albigeois—Greatness of the King of France.—VII.

The last Chapter continued—Ruin of John—Defeat of the Emperor—War of the Albigeois.—VIII. First half of the Thirteenth Century—Mysticism—Louis IX—Sanctity of the King of France.—IX. Struggle between the Mendicant Orders and the University—St. Thomas—Doubts of St. Louis—The Passion as a principle of Art in the Middle Ages.'

The next chapter, being the first of the third volume, is headed, 'The Sicilian Vespers;' the second, 'Philippe le Bel and Boniface VIII.'

This arrangement of topics promises much; and the promise is well redeemed. Every one of the chapters we have cited is full of interesting *aperçus*, and fruitful in suggestions of thought.

Forced to make a selection, we shall choose among the features of the middle age as here presented, one or two of the most interesting, and the most imperfectly understood. Of the individual figures in our author's canvass, none is more impressive than Hildebrand. Of the moral and social phenomena which he depicts, the greatest is the Papacy.

Respecting the Papal Church, and that, its greatest Pontiff, the opinions of our author are such as, from the greater number of English readers, can scarcely hope for ready acceptance. They are far removed from those either of our Protestant or of our sceptical historians. They are so unlike Hume, that they stand a chance of being confounded with Lingard. Such, however, as they are, we think them well worth knowing and considering. They are, in substance, the opinions of almost every historical inquirer in France, who has any pretensions to thought or research, be he Catholic, Protestant, or Infidel. The

time is past when any French thinker, worthy the name, looked upon the Catholic Hierarchy as having always been the base and tyrannical thing which, to a great extent, it ultimately became. No one now confounds what the Church was, when its prelates and clergy universally believed what they taught, with what it was when they had ceased to believe. No one argues—from the conduct which they even conscientiously pursued when the human intellect, having got beyond the Church, became its most formidable foe—that it must therefore have been equally an enemy to improvement when it was at the head, instead of the rear, of civilization; when all that was instructed in Europe was comprised within its pale, and it was the authorized champion of intelligence and self-control, against military and predatory violence. Even the fraud and craft by which it often aided itself in its struggles with brute force; even the ambition and selfishness by which, in its very best days, its nobler aims, like those of all other classes or bodies, were continually tarnished—do not disguise from impartial thinkers on the Continent, the fact that it was the great improver and civilizer of Europe.

That the clergy were the preservers of all letters and all culture, of the writings and even the traditions of literary antiquity, is too evident to have been ever disputed. But for them, there would have been a complete break, in Western Europe, between the ancient and modern world. Books would have disappeared, and even Christianity, if it survived at all, would have existed merely as another form of the old barbarous superstitions. Some, too, are aware of the

services rendered even to material civilization by the monastic associations of Italy and France, after the great reform by St. Benedict. Unlike the useless communities of contemplative ascetics in the East, they were diligent in tilling the earth and fabricating useful products; they knew and taught that temporal work may also be a spiritual exercise; and, protected by their sacred character from depredation, they set the first example to Europe of industry conducted on a large scale by free labour. But these things are commonly regarded as good which came out of evil; incidental benefits, arising casually, or providentially, from an institution radically vicious. It would do many English thinkers much good to acquaint themselves with the grounds on which the best Continental minds, without disguising one particle of the evil which existed, openly or latently, in the Romish Church, are on the whole convinced that it was not only a beneficent institution, but the only means capable of being now assigned, by which Europe could have been reclaimed from barbarism.

It is, no doubt, the characteristic evil incident to a corporation of priests, that the exaltation of their order becomes, in and for itself, a primary object, to which the ends of the institution are often sacrificed. That exaltation is the strongest interest of all its members, the bad equally with the good; for it is the means by which both hope to attain their ends. The maintenance of their influence is to them what the maintenance of its revenue is to a temporal government—the condition of its existence. The Romish Church, being more powerfully organized and more thoroughly disciplined than any other, pursued this

end with inflexible energy and perseverance, and often by the most culpable means. False miracles, forged donations, persecution of heretics — these things we have no desire to extenuate; but he must be wretchedly ignorant of human nature, who believes that any great or durable edifice of moral power was ever raised chiefly by such means. It is in the decline, in the decrepitude of religious systems, that force and artifice come into the first rank as expedients for maintaining a little longer what is left of their dominion. Deep sincerity, entire absorption of themselves in their task, were assuredly as indispensable conditions, in the more eminent of the Popes, of the success which they met with, as in the heroes of the Reformation. In such men the power of the hierarchy might well become a passion; but the extension of that power was a legitimate object, for the sake of the great things which they had to accomplish by it.

Who, in the middle ages, were worthier of power than the clergy? Did they not need all, and more than all the influence they could acquire, when they could not be kings or emperors, and when kings and emperors were among those whose passion and arrogance they had to admonish and govern? The great Ambrose, refusing absolution to Theodosius until he performed penance for a massacre, was a type of what these men had to do. In an age of violence and *brigandage*, who but the Church could insist on justice, and forbearance, and reconciliation? In an age when the weak were prostrate at the feet of the strong, who was there but the Church to plead to the strong for the weak? They were the depositaries of

the only moral power to which the great were amenable; they alone had a right to remind kings and potentates of responsibility; to speak to them of humility, charity, and peace. Even in the times of the first ferocious invaders, the 'Récits' of M. Thierry (though the least favourable of the modern French historians to the Romish clergy) show, at what peril to themselves, the prelates of the Church continually stepped between the oppressor and his victim. Almost all the great social improvements which took place, were accomplished under their influence. They at all times took part with the kings against the feudal anarchy. The enfranchisement of the mass of the people from personal servitude, they not only favoured, but inculcated as a Christian duty. They were the authors of the 'Truce of God,' that well-known attempt to mitigate the prevailing brutalities, by a forced suspension of acts of vengeance and private war during four days and five nights of every week. They could not succeed in enforcing this periodical armistice, which was too much in advance of the time. Their worst offence was, that they connived at acts of unjust acquisition by friends and supporters of the Pope; and encouraged unprovoked aggressions, by orthodox princes, against less obedient sons of the Church. We may add, that they were seldom favourable to civil liberty; which, indeed, in the rude form in which its first germs grew up, not as an institution, but as a principle of resistance to institutions, found little favour with speculative men in the middle ages, to whom, by a not unnatural prejudice at such a time, peace and obedience seemed the primary condition of good. But, in another sense, the Church

was eminently a democratic institution. To a temporal society in which all rank depended on birth, it opposed a spiritual society in which the source of rank was personal qualities; in which the distinctions of people and aristocracy, freeman and bondman, disappeared—which recruited itself from all ranks—in which a serf might rise to be a cardinal, or even a pope; while to rise at all to any eminence, almost always required talents, and at least a reputation for virtue. In one of the earliest combinations made by the feudal nobles against the clergy, the league of the French Seigneurs in 1246, it stands in the foremost rank of accusation against them, that they were the 'sons of serfs.'*

Now we say that the priesthood never could have stood their ground, in such an age, against kings and their powerful vassals, as an independent moral authority, entitled to advise, to reprimand, and, if need were, to denounce, if they had not been bound together into an European body, under a government of their own. They must otherwise have groveled from the first in that slavish subservience into which they sank at last. No local, no merely national organization, would have sufficed. The State has too strong a hold upon an exclusively national corporation. Nothing but an authority recognised by many nations, and not essentially dependent upon any one, could, in that age, have been adequate to the post. It required a Pope to speak with authority to Kings and Emperors. Had an individual priest or prelate had the courage to tell them that they had violated the law of God, his voice, not being the voice of the Church, would

* Michelet, vol. ii. p. 615, note.

not have been heeded. That the Pope, when he pretended to depose Kings, or made war upon them with temporal arms, went beyond his province, needs hardly, in the present day, be insisted on. But when he claimed the right of censuring and denouncing them, with whatever degree of solemnity, in the name of the moral law which all recognised, he assumed a function necessary at all times, and which, in those days, no one except the Church could assume, or was in any degree qualified to exercise. Time must show if the organ we now have for the performance of this office—if the censure by newspapers and public meetings, which has succeeded to censure by the Church—will be found in the end less liable to perversion and abuse than that was. However this may be, the latter form was the only one possible in those days.

Were the Popes, then, so entirely in the wrong, as historians have deemed them, in their disputes with the Emperors, and with the Kings of England and France? Doubtless they, no more than their antagonists, knew where to stop short. Doubtless, in the ardour of the conflict, they laid claim to powers not compatible with a purely spiritual authority, and occasionally put forth pretensions, which, if completely successful, would have plunged Europe into the torpor of an Egyptian hierarchy. But there never was any danger lest they should succeed too far. The Church was always the weaker party, and occupied essentially a defensive position.

We cannot feel any doubt that Gregory VII. whatever errors he may have committed, was right in the great objects which he proposed to himself. His

life is memorable by two things—his contest with the State, and the reform in the Church itself, which preceded it. The Church was rapidly becoming secularized. He checked the evil, by enforcing the celibacy of the clergy. Protestant writers have looked upon this ordinance of the Catholic Church, as the joint product of pontifical ambition and popular fanaticism. We would not deny that fanaticism, or rather religious asceticism, had much to do with the popular feeling on the subject, and was perhaps the only lever by which the work could possibly have been accomplished. But we believe that in that age, without the institution of celibacy, the efficiency of the Church as an instrument of human culture was gone. In the early vigorous youth of the feudal system, when everything tended to become hereditary, when every temporal function had already become so, the clerical office was rapidly becoming hereditary too. The clergy were becoming a Braminical caste; or worse—a mere appendage of the caste of soldiery. Already the prelacies and abbacies were filled by the younger brothers of the feudal nobility, who, like their elder brethren, spent the greater part of their time in hunting and war. These had begun to transmit their benefices to their sons, and give them in marriage with their daughters. The smaller preferments would have become the prey of their smaller retainers. Against this evil, what other remedy than that which Gregory adopted did the age afford? Could it remain unremedied?

And what, when impartially considered, is the protracted dispute about investitures, except a prolongation of the same struggle? For what end did the

princes of the middle ages desire the appointment of prelates? To make their profit of the revenues by keeping the sees vacant; to purchase tools, and reward adherents; at best, to keep the office in a state of complete subservience. It was no immoderate pretension in the spiritual authority to claim the free choice of its own instruments. The emperors had previously asserted a right to nominate the Pope himself, and had exercised that right in many instances. Had they succeeded, the spiritual power would have become that mere instrument of despotism which it became at Constantinople—which it is in Russia—which the Popes of Avignon became in the hands of the French kings. And even had the Pope maintained his own personal independence, the nomination of the national clergy by their respective monarchs; with no effectual concurrence of his, would have made the national clergy take part with the kings against their own order; as a large section of them always did, and as the whole clergy of France and England ended by doing, because in those countries the kings, in the main, succeeded in keeping possession of the appointment to benefices.

Even for what seems in the abstract a still more objectionable pretension, the claim to the exemption of ecclesiastics from secular jurisdiction, which has scandalized so grievously most of our English historians, there is much more to be said than those historians were aware of. What was it, after all, but the assertion, in behalf of the clergy, of the received English principle of being tried by their peers? The secular tribunals were the courts of a rival power, often in actual conflict with the clergy, always jealous

of them, always ready to make use of its jurisdiction as a means of wreaking its vengeance, or serving its ambition; and were stained besides with the grossest corruption and tyranny. 'These rights,' says M. Michelet,* 'gave rise, no doubt, to great abuses; many crimes were committed by priests, and committed with impunity; but when one reflects on the frightful barbarity, the execrable fiscality, of the lay tribunals in the twelfth century, one is forced to admit that the ecclesiastical jurisdiction was then an anchor of safety. It spared, perhaps, the guilty, but how often it saved the innocent! The Church was almost the only road by which the despised races were able to recover any ascendancy. We see this by the example of the two Saxons, Breakspear (Adrian IV.) and Becket. The liberties of the Church in that age were those of mankind.'

On the other hand, Henry II., by the Constitutions of Clarendon, assumed to himself and his great justiciary a veto on the purely spiritual act of excommunication—the last resort of the Church—the ultimate sanction on which she depended for her moral jurisdiction. No one of the king's tenants was to be excommunicated without his consent. On which side was here the usurpation? And in this pretension Henry was supported by the great majority of his own bishops. So little cause was there really to dread any undue preponderance of popes over kings.

The Papacy was in the end defeated, even in its reasonable claims. It had to give up, in the main, all the contested points. As the monarchies of Europe were consolidated, and the Kings grew more powerful,

* Vol. ii. p. 343.

the Church became more dependent. The last Pope who dared to defy a bad king, was made a prisoner in his palace, insulted and struck by the emissary of the tyrant. That Pope died broken-hearted; his immediate successor died poisoned. The next was Clement V., in whom, for the first time, the Church sank into the abject tool of secular tyranny. With him commenced that new era of the Papacy, which made it the horror and disgust of the then rapidly improving European mind, until the Reformation and its consequences closed the period which we commonly call the middle age.

We know it may be said that long before this time venality was a current and merited accusation against the Papal court. We often find Rome denounced, by the indignation of cotemporaries, as a market in which everything might be bought. All periods of supposed purity in the past administration of human affairs are the dreams of a golden age. We well know that there was only occasionally a Pope who acted consistently on any high ideal of the pontifical character; that many were sordid and vicious, and those who were not, had often sordid and vicious persons around them. Who can estimate the extent to which the power of the Church, for realizing the noble aims of its more illustrious ornaments, was crippled and made infirm by these shortcomings? But, to the time of Innocent III., if not of Boniface VIII., we are unable to doubt that it was on the whole a source of good, and of such good as could not have been provided, for that age, by any other means with which we can conceive such an age to be compatible.

Among the Epochs in the progressive movement of middle-age history, which M. Michelet has been the first to bring clearly and vividly before us, there is none more interesting than the great awakening of the human mind which immediately followed the period of the First Crusade. Others before him had pointed out the influence of the Crusade in generating the feeling of a common Christendom; in counteracting the localizing influence of the feudal institutions, and raising up a kind of republic of chivalry and Christianity; in drawing closer the ties between chiefs and vassals, or even serfs, by the need which they mutually experienced of each other's voluntary services; in giving to the rude barons of Western Europe a more varied range of ideas, and a taste for at least the material civilization, which they beheld for the first time in the dominions of the Greek Emperors and the Saracen Soldans. M. Michelet remarks that the effect even upon the religion of the time, was to soften its antipathies and weaken its superstitions. The hatred of Mussulmans was far less intense after the Crusade than at the beginning of it. The notion of a peculiar sanctity inherent in places, was greatly weakened when Christians had become the masters of the Holy Sepulchre, and found themselves neither better nor happier in consequence.

But these special results bear no proportion to the general start which was taken, about this time, by the human mind, and which, though it cannot be ascribed to the Crusade, was without doubt greatly favoured by it. That remarkable expedition was the first great event of modern times, which had an European and a Christian interest—an interest not of

nation, or place, or rank, but which the lowest serfs had in common, and more than in common, with the loftiest barons. When the soil is moved, all sorts of seeds fructify. The serfs now began to think themselves human beings. The beginning of the great popular political movement of the middle ages—the formation of the *Communes*—is almost coincident with the First Crusade. Some fragments of the eminently dramatic history of this movement are related in the concluding portion of M. Thierry's 'Letters on the History of France.' Contemporaneously with this temporal enfranchisement, began the emancipation of the human mind. Formidable heresies broke out: it was the era of Berengarius, who denied Transubstantiation—of Roscelinus, the founder of Nominalism, and questioner of the received doctrine respecting the Trinity. The very answers of the orthodox to these heretical writings, as may be seen in M. Michelet,* were lessons of free-thinking. The principle of free speculation found a still more remarkable representative, though clear of actual heresy, in the most celebrated of the schoolmen, Abailard. The popularity and European influence of his rationalizing metaphysics, as described by cotemporary authorities, must surprise those who conceive the age as one of rare and difficult communications, and without interest in letters. To silence this one man, required the eminent religious ascendancy of the most illustrious churchman of the age, Bernard of Clairvaux. The acquirements and talents of the noble-minded woman, whose name is linked for all time with that of Abailard—a man, so far as we have the means of judging,

* Vol. ii. pp. 279, 280.

not her superior even in intellect, and in every other respect unworthy of her—are illustrative of M. Michelet's views on the change which was taking place in the social condition and estimation of women:—

'The restoration of woman, which had commenced with Christianity, took place chiefly in the twelfth century. A slave in the East, even in the Greek gynæceum a recluse, emancipated by the jurisprudence of the Roman empire, she was recognised by the new religion as the equal of man. Still, Christianity, but just escaped from the sensuality of Paganism, dreaded woman, and distrusted her; or rather, men were conscious of weakness, and endeavoured by hardness and scornfulness to fortify themselves against their strongest temptation. . . . . When Gregory VII. aimed at detaching the clergy from the ties of a worldly life, there was a new outburst of feeling against that dangerous Eve, whose seductions had ruined Adam, and still pursued him in his sons.

'A movement in the contrary direction commenced in the twelfth century. Free mysticism undertook to upraise what sacerdotal severity had dragged in the mire. It was especially a Breton, Robert d'Arbrissel, who fulfilled this mission of love. He re-opened to women the bosom of Christ; he founded asylums for them; he built Fontévrault; and there were soon other Fontévraults throughout Christendom. . . . . There took place insensibly a great religious revolution. The Virgin became the deity of the world: she usurped almost all the temples and altars. Piety turned itself into an enthusiasm of chivalrous gallantry. The mother of God was proclaimed pure and without taint. The Church of Lyons, always mystical in its tendencies, celebrated, in 1134, the feast of the Immaculate Conception—thus exalting woman in the character of divine maternity, at the precise time when Heloïse was giving expression, in her letters, to the pure disinterestedness of love. Woman reigned in heaven, and

reigned on earth. We see her taking a part, and a leading part, in the affairs of the world. . . . . Louis VII. dates his acts from the coronation of his wife Adela. Women sat as judges not only in poetical contests and courts of love, but, with and on a par with their husbands, in serious affairs: the King of France expressly recognised it as their right. . . . . Excluded up to that time from successions by the feudal barbarism, they everywhere became admitted to them in the first half of the twelfth century: in England, in Castile, in Arragon, at Jerusalem, in Burgundy, Flanders, Hainault, Vermandois, Aquitaine, Provence, and the Lower Languedoc. The rapid extinction of males, the softening of manners, and the progress of equity, re-opened inheritances to women. They transported sovereignties into foreign houses, accelerated the agglomeration of states, and prepared the consolidation of great monarchies.'—(vol. ii. pp. 297-302.)

Half a century further on, the scene is changed. A new act of the great drama is now transacting. The seeds scattered fifty years before, have grown up and overshadow the world. We are no longer in the childhood, but in the stormy youth of free speculation.

'The face of the world was sombre at the close of the twelfth century. The old order was in peril, and the new had not yet begun. It was no longer the mere material struggle of the Pope and the Emperor, chasing each other alternately from Rome, as in the days of Henry IV. and Gregory VII. In the eleventh century the evil was on the surface; in 1200, at the core. A deep and terrible malady had seized upon Christendom. Gladly would it have consented to return to the quarrel of investitures, and have had to combat only on the question of the ring and crosier. In Gregory's time, the cause of the Church was the cause of liberty; it had maintained that character to the time of Alexander III., the chief of the Lombard league. But Alexander himself had not dared

to support Thomas Becket; he had defended the liberties of Italy, and betrayed those of England. The Church was about to detach herself from the great movement of the world. Instead of preceding and guiding it, as she had done hitherto, she strove to fix it, to arrest time on its passage, to stop the earth which was revolving under her feet. Innocent III. seemed to succeed in the attempt; Boniface VIII. perished in it.

'A solemn moment, and of infinite sadness. The hopes which inspired the Crusade had abandoned the earth. Authority no longer seemed unassailable; it had promised, and had deceived. Liberty began to dawn, but in a hundred fantastical and repulsive shapes, confused and convulsive, multiform, deformed. . . . . .

'In this spiritual anarchy of the twelfth century, which the irritated and trembling Church had to attempt to govern, one thing shone forth above others—a prodigiously audacious sentiment of the moral power and greatness of man. The hardy expression of the Pelagians—'Christ had nothing more than I; I, too, by virtue, can raise myself to divinity'—is reproduced in the twelfth century in barbarous and mystical forms. . . . . Messiahs everywhere arise. . . . . A Messiah appears in Antwerp, and all the populace follow him; another, in Bretagne, seems to revive the ancient gnosticism of Ireland. Amaury of Chartres, and his Breton disciple, David of Dinan, teach that every Christian is materially a member of Christ; in other words, that God is perpetually incarnated in the human race. The Son, say they, has reigned long enough; let the Holy Ghost now reign. . . . . Nothing equals the audacity of these doctors, who mostly teach in the University of Paris (authorized by Philippe-Auguste in 1200). Abailard, supposed to be crushed, lives and speaks in his disciple Peter Lombard, who from Paris gives the law to European philosophy; they reckon nearly five hundred commentators on this schoolman. The spirit of innovation has now acquired two powerful auxiliaries. Jurisprudence is growing up by the side of theology, which it undermines; the Popes

forbid the clergy to be professors of law, and, by so doing, merely open public teaching to laymen. The metaphysics of Aristotle are brought from Constantinople, while his commentators, imported from Spain, will presently be translated from the Arabic by order of the kings of Castile, and the Italian princes of the house of Suabia, Frederic II., and Manfred. This is no less than the invasion of Greece and the East into Christian philosophy. Aristotle takes his place almost beside the Saviour. At first prohibited by the Popes, afterwards tolerated, he reigns in the professorial chairs: Aristotle publicly, secretly the Arabs and the Jews, with the pantheism of Averroës and the subtleties of the Cabala. Dialectics enters into possession of all subjects, and stirs up all the boldest questions. Simon of Tournai teaches at pleasure the *pour* and the *contre*. One day when he had delighted the school of Paris, by proving marvellously the truth of the Christian religion, he suddenly exclaimed, 'O little Jesus, little Jesus! how I have glorified thy law! If I chose, I could still more easily depreciate it.'—(vol. ii. pp. 392–396.)

He then vigorously sketches the religious enthusiasts of Flanders and the Rhine, the Vaudois of the Alps, and the Albigeois of Southern France, and proceeds:—

'What must not have been, in this danger of the Church, the trouble and inquietude of its visible head! . . . . .

'The Pope at that time was a Roman, Innocent III.: a man fitted to the time. A great lawyer, accustomed on all questions to consult established right, he examined himself, and believed that the right was on his side. And, in truth, the Church had still in her favour the immense majority—the voice of the people, which is that of God. She had actual possession, so ancient that it might be deemed prescriptive. The Church was the defendant in the cause, the recognised proprietor, who was in present occupancy, and had the title-deeds; the written law seemed to speak for her. The plaintiff was human intellect; but it came too late, and, in its inexpe-

rience, took the wrong road, chicaning on texts instead of invoking principles. If asked what it would have, it could make no intelligible answer. All sorts of confused voices called for different things, and most of the assailants wished to retrograde rather than to advance. In politics, their ideas were modelled on the ancient republics; that is, town liberties, to the exclusion of the country. In religion, some wished to suppress the externals of worship, and revert, as they said, to the Apostles; others went further back, and returned to the Asiatic spirit, contending for two gods, or preferring the strict unity of Islamism.'—(pp. 419–21.)

And, after describing the popular detestation which pursued these heretics:—

'Such appeared at that time the enemies of the Church—and the Church was people'—(*l'église était peuple.*) 'The prejudices of the people, the sanguinary intoxication of their hatred and their terror, ascended through all ranks of the clergy to the Pope himself. It would be too unjust to human nature to deem that egoism or class interest alone animated the chiefs of the Church. No—all indicates that in the thirteenth century they were still convinced of their right. That right admitted, all means seemed good to them for defending it. Not for a mere human interest did St. Dominic traverse the regions of the south, alone and unarmed, in the midst of a sectarian population whom he doomed to death, courting martyrdom with the same avidity with which he inflicted it; and, whatever may have been in the great and terrible Innocent III. the temptations of pride and vengeance, other motives animated him in the crusade against the Albigeois and the foundation of the Dominican Inquisition.'—(pp. 422–3.)

The temporal means by which the Church obtained a brief respite from the dangers which beset it, consisted in letting loose against the rich and heretical South, the fanaticism and rapacity of the North. The

spiritual expedient, far the more potent of the two, was the foundation of the Mendicant Orders.

We are too much accustomed to figure to ourselves what are called religious revivals, as a feature peculiar to Protestantism and to recent times. The phenomenon is universal. In no Christian church has the religious spirit flowed like a perennial fountain; it had ever its flux and reflux, like the tide. Its history is a series of alternations between religious laxity and religious earnestness. Monkery itself, in the organized form impressed upon it by St. Benedict, was one of the incidents of a religious revival. We have already spoken of the great revival under Hildebrand. Ranke has made us understand the religious revival within the pale of Romanism itself, which turned back the advancing torrent of the Reformation. As this was characterized by the foundation of the order of Jesuits, so were the Franciscans and Dominicans the result of a similar revival, and became its powerful instrument.

The mendicant orders—especially the most popular of them, the Franciscans—were the offspring of the freethinking which had already taken strong root in the European mind; but the freedom which they represented was freedom in alliance with the Church, rising up against the freedom which was at enmity with the Church, and anathematizing it. What is called, in France, mysticism—in England, religious enthusiasm—consists essentially in looking within instead of without; in relying on an internal revelation from God to the individual believer, and receiving its principal inspirations from that, rather than from the authority of priests and teachers. St.

Francis of Assisi was such a man. Disowned by the Church, he might have been a heresiarch instead of a saint; but the Church needed men like him, and had the skill to make its instrument of the spirit which was preparing its destruction. 'In proportion to the decline of authority,' says M. Michelet, 'and the diminution of the priestly influence on the popular mind, religious feeling, being no longer under the restraint of forms, expanded itself into mysticism.'* Making room for these mystics in the ecclesiastical system itself, directing their enthusiasm into the path for which it peculiarly qualified them, that of popular preaching, and never parting with the power of repressing any dangerous excess in those whom it retained in its allegiance, the Papacy could afford to give them the rein, and indulge, within certain limits, their most unsacerdotal preference of grace to the law.

The career and character of St. Francis and his early followers are graphically delineated by M. Michelet.† As usual with devotees of his class, his great practical precept was the love of God; love which sought all means of demonstrating itself—now by ecstasies, now by austerities like those of an Indian fakeer—but also by love and charity to all creatures. In all things which had life, and in many which had not, he recognised children of God: he invoked the birds to join in gratitude and praise; he parted with his cloak to redeem a lamb from the slaughter. His followers 'wandered barefooted over Europe, always run after by the crowd: in their sermons, they brought the sacred mysteries, as it were, on the stage;

* Vol. iii. p. 195. † Vol. ii. pp. 538-543.

laughing in Christmas, weeping on Good Friday, developing, without reserve, all that Christianity possesses of dramatic elements.' The effect of such a band of missionaries must have been great in rousing and feeding dormant devotional feelings. They were not less influential in regulating those feelings, and turning into the established Catholic channels those vagaries of private enthusiasm, which might well endanger the Church, since they already threatened society itself. The spirit of religious independence had descended to the miserable, and was teaching them that God had not commanded them to endure their misery. It was a lesson for which they were not yet ripe. 'Mysticism,' says our author,* 'had already produced its most terrible fruit, hatred of the law; the wild enthusiasm of religious and political liberty. This demagogic character of mysticism, which so clearly manifested itself in the *Jacqueries* of the subsequent ages, especially in the revolt of the Swabian peasants in 1525, and of the Anabaptists in 1538, appeared already in the insurrection of the *Pastoureaux*,' during the reign of St. Louis. These unhappy people, who were peasantry of the lowest class, and, like all other insurgents of that class, perished miserably—*dispersi sunt, et quasi canes rabidi passim detruncati*, are the words of Matthew Paris—were avowed enemies of the priests, whom they are said to have massacred, and administered the sacraments themselves. They recognised as their chief, a man whom they called the grand master of Hungary, and who pretended to hold in his hand, which he kept constantly closed, a written commission from

* Vol. ii. p. 579.

the Virgin Mary. So contradictory to history is that superficial notion of the middle ages, which looks upon the popular mind as strictly orthodox, and implicitly obedient to the Pope.

Though the Papacy survived, in apparently undiminished splendour, the crisis of which we have now spoken; the mental ascendancy of the priesthood was never again what it had been before. The most orthodox of the laity, even men whom the Church has canonized, were now comparatively emancipated; they thought *with* the Church, but they no longer let the Church think *for* them. This change in the times is exemplified in the character of St. Louis—himself a lay brother of the Franciscan order; perhaps of all kings the one whose religious conscience was the most scrupulous, yet who learned his religious duty from his own strong and upright judgment, not from his confessor, nor from the Pope. He never shrank from resisting the Church when he had right on his side; and was himself a better sample than any Pope cotemporary with him, of the religious character of his age. The influences of the mystical spirit are easily discernible in his remarkable freedom, so rare in that age, from the slavery of the letter; which, as many anecdotes prove, he was always capable of sacrificing to the spirit, when any conflict arose between them.*

We are obliged to pass rapidly over some other topics, which justice to M. Michelet forbids us entirely to omit. We could extract many passages more illustrative than those we have quoted of his powers as a writer and an artist; such as the highly-finished

* Vol. ii. p. 612.

sketch* of the greatness and ruin of the unfortunate house of Hohenstaufen. We prefer to quote the remarks of greater philosophical interest, with which he winds up one great period of history, and introduces another.

'The Crusade of St. Louis was the last Crusade. The middle age had produced its ideal, its flower, and its fruit: the time was come for it to perish. In Philippe-le-Bel, grandson of St. Louis, modern times commence: the middle age is insulted in Boniface VIII., the Crusade burned at the stake in the persons of the Templars.

'Crusades will be talked about for some time longer; the word will be often repeated; it is a well-sounding word, good for levying tenths and taxes. But princes, nobles, and popes know well, among themselves, what to think of it. In 1327, we find the Venetian, Sanuto, proposing to the Pope a commercial crusade. 'It is not enough,' he said, 'to invade Egypt,' he proposed 'to ruin it.' The means he urged was to re-open to the Indian trade the channel of Persia, so that merchandize might no longer pass through Alexandria and Damietta. Thus does the modern spirit announce its approach: trade, not religion, will soon become the moving principle of great expeditions.'—(vol. ii. pp. 607–8.)

And further on, after quoting the bitter denunciation of Dante against the reigning family of France—

'This furious Ghibelline invective, full of truth and of calumny, is the protest of the old perishing world against the ugly new world which succeeds it. This new world begins towards 1300; it opens with France, and with the odious figure of Philippe-le-Bel.

'When the French monarchy, founded by Philippe-Auguste, became extinguished in Louis XVI., at least it perished in the immense glory of a young republic, which, at its first onset, vanquished and revolutionized Europe. But the poor

* Vol. ii. pp. 587–589.

middle age, its Papacy, its chivalry, its feudality, under what hands did they perish? Under those of the attorney, the fraudulent bankrupt, the false coiner.

'The bitterness of the poet is excusable; this new world is a repulsive one. If it is more legitimate than that which it replaces, what eye, even that of a Dante, could see this at the time? It is the offspring of the decrepit Roman law, of the old imperial fiscality. It is born a lawyer, a usurer; it is a born Gascon, Lombard, and Jew.

'What is most revolting in this modern system, represented especially by France, is its perpetual self-contradiction, its instinctive duplicity, the naïve hypocrisy, so to speak, with which it attests by turns its two sets of principles, Roman and feudal. France looks like a lawyer in a cuirass, an attorney clad in mail; she employs the feudal power to execute the sentences of the Roman and canon law. If this obedient daughter of the Church seizes upon Italy and chastises the Church, she chastises her as a daughter, obliged in conscience to correct her mother's misconduct.'—(vol. iii. pp. 31, 32.)

Yet this revolting exterior is but the mask of a great and necessary transformation; the substitution of legal authority, in the room of feudal violence and the *arbitrium* of the seigneur; the formation, in short, for the first time, of a government. This government could not be carried on without money. The feudal jurisdictions, the feudal armies, cost nothing to the treasury; the wages of all feudal services were the land: but the king's judges and administrators, of whom he has now a host, must be paid. 'It is not the fault of this government if it is greedy and ravenous. Ravenousness is its nature, its necessity, the foundation of its temperament. To satisfy this, it must alternately make use of cunning and force: the prince must be at once the Reynard and Isegrim of the old satire. To do him justice, he is not a lover

of war: he prefers any other means of acquisition—purchase, for instance, or usury. He traffics, he buys, he exchanges; these are means by which the strong man can honourably plunder his weaker friends.'*

'This need of money was, for several centuries, the *primum mobile* of European history. In England, it is the hinge on which our constitutional history has wholly turned: in France and elsewhere, it was the source, from this time forward, of all quarrels between the Kings and the Church. The clergy alone were rich, and money must be had. 'The confiscation of Church property was the idea of kings from the thirteenth century. The only difference is, that the Protestants took, and the Catholics made the Church give. Henry VIII. had recourse to schism—Francis I. to the Concordat. Who, in the fourteenth century, the King or the Church, was thenceforth to prey upon France?—that was the question.'—(vol. iii. p. 50.)

To get money was the purpose of Philip's quarrel with Boniface; to get money, he destroyed the Templars.

The proceedings against this celebrated Society occupy two most interesting chapters of M. Michelet's work. His view of the subject seems just and reasonable.

The suppression of the Order, if this had been all, was both inevitable and justifiable. Since the Crusades had ceased, and the crusading spirit died out, their existence and their vast wealth were grounded on false pretences. Among the mass of calumnies which, in order to make out a case for their destruc-

* Vol. iii. p. 42.

tion, their oppressor accumulated against them, there were probably some truths. It is not in the members of rich and powerful bodies which have outlived the ostensible purposes of their existence, that high examples of virtue need be sought. But it was not their private misconduct, real or imputed, that gave most aid to royal rapacity in effecting their ruin. What roused opinion against them—what gave something like a popular sanction to that atrocious trial in its early stages, before the sufferings and constancy of the victims had excited a general sympathy, was, according to our author, a mere mistake—a *mal-entendu*, arising from a change in the spirit of the times.

'The forms of reception into the Order were borrowed from the whimsical dramatic rites, the *mysteries*, which the ancient Church did not dread to connect with the most sacred doctrines and objects. The candidate for admission was presented in the character of a sinner, a bad Christian, a renegade. In imitation of St. Peter, he denied Christ; the denial was pantomimically represented by spitting on the cross. The Order undertook to restore this renegade—to lift him to a height as great as the depth to which he had fallen. Thus, in the Feast of Fools, man offered to the Church which was to regenerate him, the homage even of his imbecility, of his infamy. These religious comedies, every day less understood, became more and more dangerous, more capable of scandalizing a prosaic age, which saw only the letter, and lost the meaning of the symbol.'—(vol. iii. pp. 127, 128.)

This is not a mere fanciful hypothesis. M. Michelet has elsewhere shown that the initiation into the Guilds of Artificers, in the middle ages, was of this very character. The acolyte affected to be the most worthless character upon earth, and was usually made

to perform some act symbolical of worthlessness: after which, his admission into the fraternity was to have the merit and honour of his reformation. Such forms were in complete harmony with the genius of an age, in which a transfer of land was not binding without the delivery of a clod—in which all things tended to express themselves in mute symbols, rather than by the conventional expedient of verbal language. It is the nature of all forms used on important occasions, to outlast, for an indefinite period, the state of manners and society in which they originated. The childlike character of the religious sentiment in a rude people, who know terror but not awe, and are often on the most intimate terms of familiarity with the objects of their adoration, makes it easily conceivable that the ceremonies used on admission into the Order were established without any irreverent feeling, in the purely symbolical acceptation which some of the witnesses affirmed. The time, however, had past, when such an explanation would be understood or listened to. 'What arrayed the whole people against them—what left them not a single defender among so many noble families to which they were related—was this monstrous accusation of denying and spitting on the cross. This was precisely the accusation which was admitted by the greatest number of the accused. The simple statement of the fact turned every one against them; everybody crossed himself, and refused to hear another word. Thus the Order, which had represented in the most eminent degree the symbolical genius of the middle age, died of a symbol misunderstood.'—(vol. iii. p. 206.)

From this time the history of France is not, except in a much more indirect manner, the history of Europe and of civilization. The subordination of the Church to the State once fully established, the next period was mainly characterized by the struggles between the king and the barons, and final victory of the crown. On this subject France cannot represent English history, where the crown was ultimately the defeated instead of the victorious party; and the incidents of the contest are necessarily national, not European incidents. Here, therefore, having regard also to our necessary limits, our extracts from M. Michelet's work may suitably close; although the succeeding volumes, which come down nearly to Louis XI., are not inferior in merit to those from which we have quoted; and are even, as we before remarked, superior in the value of their materials—being grounded, in a great measure, on the public documents of the period, and not, like previous histories, almost exclusively on the chronicles.

In what we have said, we have been far more desirous to make the work known, and recommend it to notice, than to criticise it. The latter could only become a needful service after the former had been accomplished. The faults, whether of matter or manner, of which M. Michelet can be accused, are not such as require being pointed out to English readers. There is much more danger lest they should judge too strictly the speculations of such a man; and turn impatiently from the germs of truth which often lurk even in the errors of a man of genius. This is, indeed, the more to be apprehended, as M. Michelet, apparently, has by no means the fear of an unsympa-

thizing audience before his eyes. Where we require thoughts, he often gives us only allusions to thoughts. We continually come upon sentences, and even single expressions, which take for granted a whole train of previous speculation—often perfectly just, and perhaps familiar to French readers; but which in England would certainly have required to be set forth in terms, and cleared up by explanations.

His style cannot be fairly judged from the specimens we have exhibited. Our extracts were selected as specimens of his ideas, not of his literary merits; and none have been taken from the narrative part, which is, of course, the principal part of the work, and the most decisive test of powers of composition in a writer of history. We should say, however, of the style generally, that it is sparkling rather than flowing; full of expressiveness, but too continuously epigrammatic to carry the reader easily along with it; and pushing that ordinary artifice of modern French composition, the personification of abstractions, to an almost startling extent. It is not, however, though it is very likely to be taken for, an affected style; for affectation cannot be justly imputed, where the words are chosen, as is evidently the case here, for no purpose but to express ideas; and where, consequently, the mode of expression, however peculiar, grows from, and corresponds to, the peculiarities of the mode of thought.

THE CLAIMS OF LABOUR.*

'PERSONS of a thoughtful mind,' says the introduction to this little volume, 'seeing closely the falsehood, the folly, and the arrogance of the age in which they live, are apt, occasionally, to have a great contempt for it; and I doubt not that many a man looks upon the present time as one of feebleness and degeneracy. There are, however, signs of an increased solicitude for the Claims of Labour, which of itself is a thing of the highest promise, and more to be rejoiced over than all the mechanical triumphs which both those who would magnify, and those who would depreciate, the present age, would be apt to point to as containing its especial significance and merit.'

It is true that many are now inquiring, more earnestly than heretofore, 'how the great mass of the people are fed, clothed, and taught—and whether the improvement in their condition corresponds at all with the improvement of the condition of the middle and upper classes.' And many are of opinion, with the writer from whom we quote, that the answer which can be given to these questions is an unsatisfactory one. Nor is the newly-awakened interest in the condition of the labouring people confined to persons, like this author, of feeling and reflection. To its claims upon the conscience and philanthropy of the

* *Edinburgh Review*, April 1845.—[Part of a review of a work entitled 'The Claims of Labour: an Essay on the Duties of the Employers to the Employed.']

more favoured classes, to its ever-strengthening demands upon their sense of self-interest, this cause now adds the more ephemeral attractions of the last new fashion. The Claims of Labour have become the question of the day: the current of public meetings, subscriptions, and associations, has for some time set strongly in that direction; and many minor topics which previously occupied the public mind, have either merged into that question, or been superseded by it. Even the Legislature, which seldom concerns itself much with new tendencies of opinion until they have grown too powerful to be safely overlooked, is invited, in each Session with increasing urgency, to provide that the labouring classes shall earn more, work less, or have their lot in some other manner alleviated; and in each Session yields more or less cheerfully, but still yields, though slowly yet increasingly, to the requisition.

That this impulse is salutary and promising, few will deny; but it would be idle to suppose that it has not its peculiar dangers, or that the business of doing good can be the only one for which zeal suffices, without knowledge or circumspection. A change from wrong to right, even in little things, is not so easy to make, as to wish for, and to talk about. Society cannot with safety, in one of its gravest concerns, pass at once from selfish supineness to restless activity. It has a long and difficult apprenticeship yet to serve; during which we shall be often reminded of the *dictum* of Fontenelle, that mankind only settle into the right course after passing through and exhausting all the varieties of error. But however this may be, the movement is not therefore to be damped or discou-

raged. If, in the attempt to benefit the labouring classes, we are destined to see great mistakes committed in practice, as so many errors are already advocated in theory, let us not lay the blame upon excess of zeal. The danger is, that people in general will care enough for the object, to be willing to sacrifice other people's interest to it, but not their own; and that the few who lead will make the sacrifice of their money, their time, even their bodily ease, in the cause; but will not do for its sake what to most men is so much more difficult—undergo the formidable labour of thought.

For several reasons, it will be useful to trace back this philanthropic movement to its small and unobvious beginnings—to note its fountain-head, and show what mingled streams have from time to time swelled its course.

We are inclined to date its origin from an event which would in vulgar apprehension seem to have a less title to that than to any other honourable distinction—the appearance of Mr. Malthus's Essay on Population. Though the assertion may be looked upon as a paradox, it is historically true, that only from that time has the economical condition of the labouring classes been regarded by thoughtful men as susceptible of permanent improvement. We know that this was not the inference originally drawn from the truth propounded by Mr. Malthus. Even by himself, that truth was at first announced as an inexorable law, which, by perpetuating the poverty and degradation of the mass of mankind, gave a *quietus* to the visions of indefinite social improvement which had agitated so fiercely a neighbouring nation. To

these supposed corollaries from Mr. Malthus's principle, it was, we believe, indebted for its early success with the more opulent classes, and for much of its lasting unpopularity with the poorer. But this view of its tendencies only continued to prevail while the theory itself was but imperfectly understood; and now lingers nowhere but in those dark corners into which no subsequent lights have penetrated. The first promulgator of a truth is not always the best judge of its tendencies and consequences; but Mr. Malthus early abandoned the mistaken inferences he had at first drawn from his celebrated principle, and adopted the very different views now almost unanimously professed by those who recognise his doctrine.

So long as the necessary relation between the numbers of the labouring population and their wages had escaped attention, the poverty, bordering on destitution, of the great mass of mankind, being an universal fact, was (by one of those natural illusions from which human reason is still so incompletely emancipated) conceived to be inevitable;—a provision of nature, and as some said, an ordinance of God; a part of human destiny, susceptible merely of partial alleviation in individual cases, from public or private charity. The only persons by whom any other opinion seemed to be entertained, were those who prophesied advancements in physical knowledge and mechanical art, sufficient to alter the fundamental conditions of man's existence on earth; or who professed the doctrine, that poverty is a factitious thing, produced by the tyranny and rapacity of governments and of the rich. Even so recent a thinker, and one so much in advance of his predecessors, as Adam Smith, went no further than

to say, that the labourers might be well off in a rapidly progressive state of the public wealth;—a state which has never yet comprehended more than a small portion of the earth's surface at once, and can nowhere last indefinitely; but that they must be pinched and in a condition of hardship in the stationary state, which in a finite world, composed of matter not changeable in its properties, is the state towards which things must be at all times tending. The ideas, therefore, of the most enlightened men, anterior to Mr. Malthus, led really to the discouraging anticipations for which his doctrine has been made accountable. But these anticipations vanished, so soon as the truths brought to light by Mr. Malthus were correctly understood. It was then seen that the capabilities of increase of the human species, as of animal nature in general (being far greater than those of subsistence under any except very unusual circumstances), must be, and are, controlled, everywhere else, by one of two limiting principles—starvation, or prudence and conscience: That, under the operation of this conflict, the reward of ordinary unskilled labour is always and everywhere (saving temporary variations, and rare conjunctions of circumstances) at the lowest point to which the labourers will consent to be reduced—the point below which they will not choose to propagate their species: That this minimum, though everywhere much too low for human happiness and dignity, is different in different places, and in different ages of the world; and, in an improving country, has on the whole a tendency to rise. These considerations furnished a sufficient explanation of the state of extreme poverty in which the majority of mankind had almost everywhere been

found, without supposing any inherent necessity in the case—any universal cause, other than the causes which have made human progress altogether so imperfect and slow as it is. And the explanation afforded a sure hope, that whatever accelerates that progress would tell with full effect upon the physical condition of the labouring classes. Whatever raises the civilization of the people at large—whatever accustoms them to require a higher standard of subsistence, comfort, taste, and enjoyment, affords of itself, according to this encouraging view of human prospects, the means of satisfying the wants which it engenders. In every moral or intellectual benefit conferred upon the mass of the people, this doctrine teaches us to see an assurance also of their physical advantage; a means of enabling them to improve their worldly circumstances—not in the vulgar way of 'rising in the world,' so often recommended to them—not by endeavouring to escape out of their class, as if to live by manual labour were a fate only endurable as a step to something else; but by raising the class itself in physical well-being and in self-estimation. These are the prospects which the vilified population-principle has opened to mankind. True, indeed, the doctrine teaches this further lesson, that any attempt to produce the same result by other means—any scheme of beneficence which trusts for its moving power to anything but to the influence over the minds and habits of the people, which it either directly aims at, or may happen indirectly to promote—might, for any *general* effect of a beneficial kind which it can produce, as well be let alone. And, the doctrine being brought thus into conflict with those plans of easy beneficence which

accord so well with the inclinations of man, but so ill with the arrangements of nature, we need not wonder that the epithets of 'Malthusians' and 'Political Economists' are so often considered equivalent to hard-hearted, unfeeling, and enemies of the poor;—accusations so far from being true, that no thinkers, of any pretensions to sobriety, cherish such hopeful views of the future social position of labour, or have so long made the permanent increase of its remuneration the turning-point of their political speculations, as those who most broadly acknowledge the doctrine of Malthus.

But if the permanent place now occupied in the minds of thinking men by the question of improving the condition of the labouring classes, may be dated from the new light cast by Malthus's speculations upon the determining laws of that condition, other causes are needful to account for the popularity of the subject as one of the topics of the day; and we believe they will be found in the stir and commotion of the national mind, consequent upon the passing of the Reform Bill.

It was foretold during the Reform crisis, that when the consequences of the Bill should have had time to manifest themselves, the direct effects with which all mouths were filled, would prove unimportant compared with those indirect effects which were never mentioned in discussion, and which hardly any one seemed to think of. The prophecy has been signally verified. Considered as a great constitutional change, both friends and enemies now seem rather surprised that they should have ascribed so much efficacy to the Bill for good or for evil. But its indirect consequences

have surpassed every calculation. The series of events, commencing with Catholic Emancipation, and consummated by the Reform Act, brought home for the first time to the existing generation a practical consciousness of living in a world of change. It gave the first great shock to old habits. It was to politics what the Reformation was to religion—it made reason the recognised standard, instead of authority. By making it evident to the public that they were on a new sea, it destroyed the force of the instinctive objection to new courses. Reforms have still to encounter opposition from those whose interests they affect, or seem to affect; but innovation is no longer under a ban, merely as innovation. The existing system has lost its *prestige;* it has ceased to be the system which Tories had been taught to venerate, and has not become that which Liberals were accustomed to desire. When any wide-spread social evil was brought before minds thus prepared, there was such a chance as there had not been for the last two hundred years, of its being examined with a real desire to find a remedy, or at least without a predetermination to leave things alone. That the evils of the condition of the working classes should be brought before the mind of the nation in the most emphatic manner, was the care of those classes themselves. Their 'petition of grievances' was embodied in the People's Charter.

The democratic movement among the operative classes, commonly known as Chartism, was the first open separation of interest, feeling, and opinion, between the labouring portion of the commonwealth and all above them. It was the revolt of nearly all the active

talent, and a great part of the physical force, of the working classes, against their whole relation to society. Conscientious and sympathizing minds among the ruling classes, could not but be strongly impressed by such a protest. They could not but ask themselves, with misgiving, what there was to say in reply to it; how the existing social arrangements could best be justified to those who deemed themselves aggrieved by them. It seemed highly desirable that the benefits derived from those arrangements by the poor should be made less questionable—should be such as could not easily be overlooked. If the poor had reason for their complaints, the higher classes had not fulfilled their duties as governors; if they had no reason, neither had those classes fulfilled their duties in allowing them to grow up so ignorant and uncultivated as to be open to these mischievous delusions. While one sort of minds among the more fortunate classes were thus influenced by the political claims put forth by the operatives, there was another description upon whom that phenomenon acted in a different manner, leading, however, to the same result. While some, by the physical and moral circumstances which they saw around them, were made to feel that the condition of the labouring classes *ought* to be attended to, others were made to see that it *would* be attended to, whether they wished to be blind to it or not. The victory of 1832, due to the manifestation, though without the actual employment, of physical force, had taught a lesson to those who, from the nature of the case, have always the physical force on their side; and who only wanted the organization, which they were rapidly acquiring, to convert their

physical power into a moral and social one. It was no longer disputable that something must be done to render the multitude more content with the existing state of things.

Ideas, unless outward circumstances conspire with them, have in general no very rapid or immediate efficacy in human affairs; and the most favourable outward circumstances may pass by, or remain inoperative, for want of ideas suitable to the conjuncture. But when the right circumstances and the right ideas meet, the effect is seldom slow in manifesting itself. In the posture of things which has been described, we attribute considerable effect to certain writers, by whom what many were either thinking or prepared to think, was for the first time expressly proclaimed. Among these must be reckoned Mr. Carlyle, whose 'Chartism' and 'Past and Present' were openly, what much of his previous writings had been incidentally, an indignant remonstrance with the higher classes on their sins of omission against the lower; contrasted with what he deemed the superior efficiency, in that relation, of the rulers in older times. On both these points, he has met with auxiliaries from a directly opposite point of the political horizon; from those whom a spirit of reaction against the democratic tendencies of the age, had flung off with the greatest violence in the direction of feudal and sacerdotal ascendancy. As, in the Stuart times, there were said to be Church Puritans and State Puritans, so there are now Church Puseyites, and what may be called State Puseyites; men who look back with fondness to times when the poor had no notion of any other social state than to give obedience to the nearest great land-

holder, and receive protection; and who assert, in the meantime, the right of the poor to protection, in hopes that the obedience will follow.

To complete the explanation of this increase of sympathy for the poor, it ought to be noticed, that, until lately, few were adequately aware of their real condition. The agitation against the Poor-Law, bad as it was and is, both in its objects and in its effects, had in it this good, that it incessantly invited attention to the details of distress. The inquiries emanating from the Poor-Law Commission, and the official investigations of the last few years, brought to light many facts which made a great impression upon the public; and the poverty and wretchedness of great masses of people were incidentally unveiled by the struggles of parties respecting the Corn-Laws. The Agriculturists attempted to turn the tables upon their opponents, by highly-coloured pictures of the sufferings and degradation of the Factory operatives; and the League repaid the attack with interest, by sending emissaries into the rural districts, and publishing the deplorable poverty of the agricultural labourers.

From these multifarious causes a feeling has been awakened, which would soon be as influential in elections as the anti-slavery movement some years ago, and dispose of funds equal to those of the missionary societies, had it but as definite an object. The stream at present flows in a multitude of small channels. Societies for the protection of needlewomen, of governesses—associations to improve the buildings of the labouring classes, to provide them with baths, with parks and promenades, have started into existence. Legislative interference to abridge the hours of labour

in manufactories has obtained large minorities, and once a passing majority, in the House of Commons; and attempts are multiplying to obtain, by the consent of employers, a similar abridgment in many departments of retail trade. In the rural districts, every expedient, practicable or not, for giving work to the unemployed, finds advocates; public meetings for the discussion and comparison of projects have lately been frequent; and the movement towards the 'allotment system' is becoming general.

If these, and other modes of relieving distress, were looked upon simply in the light of ordinary charity, they would not fill the large space they do in public discussion, and would not demand any special comment. To give money in alms has never been, either in this country or in most others, a rare virtue. Charitable institutions, and subscriptions for relief of the destitute, already abounded: and if new forms of suffering, or classes of sufferers previously overlooked, were brought into notice, nothing was more natural than to do for them what had already been done for others. People usually give alms to gratify their feelings of compassion, or to discharge what they think their duty by giving of their superfluity to alleviate the wants of individual sufferers; and beyond this they do not, nor are they, in general, qualified to look. But it is not in this spirit that the new schemes of benevolence are conceived. They are propounded as instalments of a great social reform. They are celebrated as the beginning of a new moral order, or an old order revived, in which the possessors of property are to resume their place as the paternal guardians of those less fortunate; and

which, when established, is to cause peace and union throughout society, and to extinguish, not indeed poverty—that hardly seems to be thought desirable—but the more abject forms of vice, destitution, and physical wretchedness. What has hitherto been *done* in this brilliant career of improvement, is of very little importance compared with what is *said;* with the objects held up to pursuit, and the theories avowed. These are not now confined to speculative men and professed philanthropists. They are made familiar to every reader of newspapers, by sedulous inculcation from day to day.

It is therefore not superfluous to consider whether these theories, and the expectations built upon them, are rational or chimerical; whether the attempt to carry them out would in the end be found to accord or conflict with the nature of man, and of the world in which he is cast. It would be unfair to the theorists to try them by anything which has been commenced, or even projected. Were they asked if they expect any good to the general interest of the labouring people, from a Labourers' Friend Society, or a Society for Distressed Needlewomen, they would of course answer that they do not; that these are but the first leaf-buds of what they hope to nourish into a stately and spreading tree; that they do not limit their intentions to mitigating the evils of a low remuneration of labour, but must have a high remuneration; in the words of the operatives in the late disturbances—'a fair day's wages for a fair day's work;'—that they hope to secure this, and will be contented with nothing short of it. Here, then, is a ground on which we can fairly meet them. That

object is ours also. The question is of means, not ends. Let us look a little into the means they propose.

Their theory appears to be, in few words, this—that it is the proper function of the possessors of wealth, and especially of the employers of labour and the owners of land, to take care that the labouring people are well off:—that they ought always to pay good wages;—that they ought to withdraw their custom, their patronage, and any other desirable thing at their disposal, from all employers who will not do the like;—that, at these good wages, they ought to give employment to as great a number of persons as they can afford; and to make them work for no greater number of hours in the twenty-four, than is compatible with comfort, and with leisure for recreation and improvement. That if they have land or houses to be let to tenants, they should require and accept no higher rents than can be paid with comfort; and should be ready to build, at such rents as can be conveniently paid, warm, airy, healthy, and spacious cottages, for any number of young couples who may ask for them.

All this is not said in direct terms; but something very little short of it is. These principles form the standard by which we daily see the conduct, both of classes and of individuals, measured and condemned; and if these principles are not true, the new doctrines are without a meaning. It is allowable to take this picture as a true likeness of the 'new moral world' which the present philanthropic movement aims at calling into existence.

Mankind are often cautioned by divines and

moralists against unreasonableness in their expectations. We attach greater value to the more limited warning against inconsistency in them. The state of society which this picture represents, is a conceivable one. We shall not at present inquire if it is of all others the most eligible one, even as an Utopia. We only ask if its promoters are willing to accept this state of society, together with its inevitable accompaniments.

It is quite possible to impose, as a moral or a legal obligation, upon the higher classes, that they shall be answerable for the well-doing and well-being of the lower. There have been times and places in which this has in some measure been done. States of society exist, in which it is the recognised duty of every owner of land, not only to see that all who dwell and work thereon are fed, clothed, and housed, in a sufficient manner; but to be, in so full a sense, responsible for their good conduct, as to indemnify all other persons for any damage they do, or offence they may commit. This must surely be the ideal state of society which the new philanthropists are contending for. Who are the happy labouring classes who enjoy the blessings of these wise ordinances? The Russian boors. There are other labourers, not merely tillers of the soil, but workers in great establishments partaking of the nature of manufactories, for whom the laws of our own country, even in our own time, compelled their employers to find wholesome food, and sufficient lodging and clothing. Who were these? The slaves on a West Indian estate. The relation sought to be established between the landed and manufacturing classes and the labourers, is therefore by no means un-

exampled. The former have before now been forced to maintain the latter, and to provide work for them, or support them in idleness. But this obligation never has existed, and never will nor can exist, without, as a countervailing element, absolute power, or something approaching to it, in those who are bound to afford this support, over those entitled to receive it. Such a relation has never existed between human beings, without immediate degradation to the character of the dependent class. Shall we take another example, in which things are not carried quite so far as this? There are governments in Europe who look upon it as part of their duty to take care of the physical well-being and comfort of the people. The Austrian government, in its German dominions, does so. Several of the minor German governments do so. But with paternal care is connected paternal authority. In these states we find severe restrictions on marriage. No one is permitted to marry, unless he satisfies the authorities that he has a rational prospect of being able to support a family.

Thus much, at least, it might have been expected that the apostles of the new theory would have been prepared for. They cannot mean that the working classes should combine the liberty of action of independent citizens, with the immunities of slaves. There are but two modes of social existence for human beings: they must be left to the natural consequences of their mistakes in life; or society must guard against the mistakes, by prevention or punishment. Which will the new philanthropists have? If it is really to be incumbent on whoever have more than a mere subsistence, to give, so far as their means enable them,

good wages and comfortable homes to all who present themselves, it is not surely intended that these should be permitted to follow the instinct of multiplication at the expense of others, until all are reduced to the same level as themselves. We should therefore have expected that the philanthropists would have accepted the condition, and contended for such a measure of restriction as might prevent the good they meditate from producing an overbalance of evil. To our surprise, we find them the great sticklers for the domestic liberty of the poor. The outcry against the Poor-Law finds among them its principal organs. Far from being willing that a man should be subject, when out of the poorhouse, to any restraints other than his own prudence may dictate, they will not submit to its being imposed upon him while actually supported at the expense of others. It is they who talk of Union Bastiles. They cannot bear that even a workhouse should be a place of regulation and discipline; that any extrinsic restraint should be applied even there. Their bitterest quarrel with the present system of relief is, that it enforces the separation of the sexes.

The higher and middle classes might and ought to be willing to submit to a very considerable sacrifice of their own means, for improving the condition of the existing generation of labourers, if by this they could hope to provide similar advantages for the generation to come. But why should they be called upon to make these sacrifices, merely that the country may contain a greater number of people, in as great poverty and as great liability to destitution as now? If whoever has too little, is to come to them to make

it more, there is no alternative but restrictions on marriage, combined with such severe penalties on illegitimate births, as it would hardly be possible to enforce under a social system in which all grown persons are, nominally at least, their own masters. Without these provisions, the millennium promised would, in little more than a generation, sink the people of any country in Europe to one level of poverty. If, then, it is intended that the law, or the persons of property, should assume a control over the multiplication of the people, tell us so plainly, and inform us how you propose to do it. But it will doubtless be said, that nothing of this sort would be endurable; that such things are not to be dreamt of in the state of English society and opinion; that the spirit of equality, and the love of individual independence, have so pervaded even the poorest class, that they would not take plenty to eat and drink at the price of having their most personal concerns regulated for them by others. If this be so, all schemes for withdrawing wages from the control of supply and demand, or raising the people by other means than by such changes in their minds and habits as shall make them fit guardians of their own physical condition, are schemes for combining incompatibilities. They ought on proper conditions to be shielded, we hope they already are so, by public or private charity, from actual want of mere necessaries, and from any other extreme of bodily suffering. But if the whole income of the country were divided among them in wages or poor-rates, still, until there is a change in themselves, there can be no lasting improvement in their outward condition.

And how is this change to be effected, while we continue inculcating upon them that their wages are to be regulated for them, and that to keep wages high is other people's business and not theirs? All classes are ready enough, without prompting, to believe that whatever ails them is not their fault, but the crime of somebody else; and that they are granting an indemnity to the crime if they attempt to get rid of the evil by any effort or sacrifice of their own. The National Assembly of France has been much blamed for talking in a rhetorical style about the rights of man, and neglecting to say anything about the duties. The same error is now in the course of being repeated with respect to the rights of poverty. It would surely be no derogation from any one's philanthropy to consider, that it is one thing to tell the rich that they ought to take care of the poor, and another thing to tell the poor that the rich ought to take care of them; and that it is rather idle in these days to suppose that a thing will not be overheard by the poor, because it is not designed for their ears. It is most true that the rich have much to answer for in their conduct to the poor. But in the matter of their poverty, there is no way in which the rich *could* have helped them, but by inducing them to help themselves; and if, while we stimulate the rich to repair this omission, we do all that depends on us to inculcate upon the poor that they need not attend to the lesson, we must be little aware of the sort of feelings and doctrines with which the minds of the poor are already filled. If we go on in this course, we may succeed in bursting society asunder by a Socialist revolution; but the poor, and their poverty, we shall leave worse than we found them.

The first remedy, then, is to abstain from directly counteracting our own end. The second, and most obvious, is Education. And this indeed is not the principal, but the sole remedy, if understood in its widest sense. Whatever acts upon the minds of the labouring classes, is properly their education. But their minds, like those of other people, are acted upon by the whole of their social circumstances; and often the part of their education which is least efficacious as such, is that which goes by the name.

Yet even in that comparatively narrow sense, too much stress can hardly be laid upon its importance. We have scarcely seen more than the small beginnings of what might be effected for the country even by mere schooling. The religious rivalries, which are the unhappy price the course of our history has compelled us to pay for such religious liberty as we possess, have as yet thwarted every attempt to make this benefit universal. But if the children of different religious bodies cannot be instructed together, each can be instructed apart. And if we may judge from the zeal manifested, and the sums raised, both by the Church and by Dissenters, since the abandonment of the Government measure two years ago, there is no deficiency of pecuniary means for the support of schools, even without the aid which the State certainly will not refuse. Unfortunately there is something wanting which pecuniary means will not supply. There is a lack of sincere desire to attain the end. There have been schools enough in England, these thirty years, to have regenerated the people, if, wherever the means were found, the end had been desired. But it is not always where there are schools that there

is a wish to educate. There may be a wish that children should learn to read the Bible, and, in the Church Schools, to repeat the Catechism. In most cases, there is little desire that they should be taught more; in many, a decided objection to it. Schoolmasters, like other public officers, are seldom inclined to do more than is exacted from them; but we believe that teaching the poor is almost the only public duty in which the payers are more a check than a stimulant to the zeal of their own agents. A teacher whose heart is in the work, and who attempts any enlargement of the instruction, often finds his greatest obstacle in the fears of the patrons and managers lest the poor should be 'over-educated;' and is driven to the most absolute evasions to obtain leave to teach the common rudiments of knowledge. The four rules of arithmetic are often only tolerated through ridiculous questions about Jacob's lambs, or the number of the Apostles or of the Patriarchs; and geography can only be taught through maps of Palestine, to children who have yet to learn that the earth consists of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America. A person must be beyond being argued with, who believes that this is the way to teach religion, or that a child will be made to understand the Bible by being taught to understand nothing else. We forbear to comment on the instances in which Church Schools have been opened, solely that through the influence of superiors the children might be drawn away from a Dissenting School already existing; and, as soon as that was shut up, the rival establishment, having attained its end, has been allowed to fall into disuse.

This spirit could never be tolerated by any person

of honest intentions, who knew the value of even the commonest knowledge to the poor. We know not how the case may be in other countries, among a more quick-witted people; but in England, it would hardly be believed to what a degree all that is morally objectionable in the lowest class of the working people is nourished, if not engendered, by the low state of their understandings. Their infantine credulity to what they hear, when it is from their own class; their incapacity to observe what is before their eyes; their inability to comprehend or believe purposes in others which they have not been taught to expect, and are not conscious of in themselves—are the known characteristics of persons of low intellectual faculties in all classes. But what would not be equally credible without experience, is an amount of deficiency in the power of reasoning and calculation, which makes them insensible to their own direct personal interests. Few have considered how any one who could instil into these people the commonest worldly wisdom—who could render them capable of even selfish prudential calculations—would improve their conduct in every relation of life, and clear the soil for the growth of right feelings and worthy propensities.

To know what schools may do, we have but to think of what the Scottish Parochial Schools have formerly done. The progress of wealth and population has outgrown the machinery of these schools, and, in the towns especially, they no longer produce their full fruits: but what do not the peasantry of Scotland owe to them? For two centuries, the Scottish peasant, compared with the same class in other situations, has been a reflecting, an observing, and

therefore naturally a self-governing, a moral, and a successful human being—because he has been a reading and a discussing one; and this he owes, above all other causes, to the parish schools. What during the same period have the English peasantry been?

Let us be assured that too much opportunity cannot be given to the poor of exercising their faculties, nor too great a variety of ideas placed within their reach. We hail, therefore, the cheap Libraries, which are supplying even the poorest with matter more or less instructive, and, what is of equal importance, calculated to interest their minds. But it is not only, or even principally, books and book learning, that constitutes education for the working or for any other class. Schools for reading are but imperfect things, unless systematically united with schools of industry; not to improve them as workmen merely, but as human beings. It is by action that the faculties are called forth, more than by words—more at least than by words unaccompanied by action. We want schools in which the children of the poor should learn to use not only their hands, but their minds, for the guidance of their hands; in which they should be trained to the actual adaptation of means to ends; should become familiar with the accomplishment of the same object by various processes, and be made to apprehend with their intellects in what consists the difference between the right way of performing industrial operations and the wrong. Meanwhile they would acquire, not only manual dexterity, but habits of order and regularity, of the utmost use in after-life, and which have more to do with the formation of character than many persons are aware of. Such things would do much

more than is usually believed towards converting these neglected creatures into rational beings—beings capable of foresight, accessible to reasons and motives addressed to their understanding; and therefore not governed by the utterly senseless modes of feeling and action, which so much astonish educated and observing persons when brought into contact with them.

But when education, in this its narrow sense, has done its best, and even to enable it to do its best, an education of another sort is required, such as schools cannot give. What is taught to a child at school will be of little effect, if the circumstances which surround the grown man or woman contradict the lesson. We may cultivate his understanding, but what if he cannot employ it without becoming discontented with his position, and disaffected to the whole order of things in which he is cast? Society educates the poor, for good or for ill, by its conduct to them, even more than by direct teaching. A sense of this truth is the most valuable feature in the new philanthropic agitation; and the recognition of it is important, whatever mistakes may be at first made in practically applying it.

In the work before us, and in the best of the other writings which have appeared lately on the philanthropic side of the subject, a strong conviction is expressed, that there can be no healthful state of society, and no social or even physical welfare for the poor, where there is no relation between them and the rich except the payment of wages, and (we may add) the receipt of charity; no sense of co-operation and common interest between those natural

associates who are now called the employers and the employed. In part of this we agree, though we think the case not a little overstated. A well-educated labouring class could, and we believe would, keep up its condition to a high standard of comfort, or at least at a great distance from physical destitution, by the exercise of the same degree of habitual prudence now commonly practised by the middle class; among whom the responsibilities of a family are rarely incurred without some prospect of being able to maintain it with the customary decencies of their station. We believe, too, that if this were the case, the poor could do very well without those incessant attentions on the part of the rich, which constitute the new whole duty of man to his poorer neighbour. Seeing no necessary reason why the poor should be hopelessly dependent, we do not look upon them as permanent subjects for the exercise of those peculiar virtues which are essentially intended to mitigate the humiliation and misery of dependence. But the need of greater fellow-feeling and community of interest between the mass of the people and those who are by courtesy considered to guide and govern them, does not require the aid of exaggeration. We yield to no one in our wish that 'cash payment' should be no longer 'the universal *nexus* between man and man;' that the employers and employed should have the feelings of friendly allies, not of hostile rivals whose gain is each other's loss. But while we agree, so far, with the new doctrines, it seems to us that some of those who preach them are looking in the wrong quarter for what they seek. The social relations of former times, and those of the present, not only are

not, but cannot possibly be, the same. The essential requirements of human nature may be alike in all ages, but each age has its own appropriate means of satisfying them. Feudality, in whatever manner we may conceive it modified, is not the type on which institutions or habits can now be moulded. The age that produces railroads which, for a few shillings, will convey a labourer and his family fifty miles to find work; in which agricultural labourers read newspapers, and make speeches at public meetings called by themselves to discuss low wages—is not an age in which a man can feel loyal and dutiful to another because he has been born on his estate. Obedience in return for protection, is a bargain only made when protection can be had on no other terms. Men now make that bargain with society, not with an individual. The law protects them, and they give their obedience to that. Obedience in return for wages is a different matter. They will make that bargain too, if necessity drives them to it. But good-will and gratitude form no part of the conditions of such a contract. The deference which a man now pays to his 'brother of the earth,' merely because the one was born rich and the other poor, is either hypocrisy or servility. Real attachment, a genuine feeling of subordination, must now be the result of personal qualities, and requires them on both sides equally. Where these are wanting, in proportion to the enforced observances will be the concealed enmity; not, perhaps, towards the individual, for there will seldom be the extremes either of hatred or of affection in a relation so merely transitory; but that *sourde* animosity which is universal in this country towards the

whole class of employers, in the whole class of the employed.

As one of the correctives to this deep-seated alienation of feeling, much stress is laid on the importance of personal demeanour. In the 'Claims of Labour' this is the point most insisted upon. The book contains numerous aphorisms on this subject, and they are such as might be expected from the author of 'Essays written in the Intervals of Business,' and 'Thoughts in the Cloister and the Crowd.' A person disposed to criticise might indeed object, that these earnest and thoughtful sayings are chiefly illustrative of the duty of every one to every one; and are applicable to the formation of our own character, and to human relations generally, rather than to the special relation between the rich and the poor. It is not as concerning the poor specially, that these lessons are needed. The faults of the rich to the poor are the universal faults. The demeanour fitting towards the poor, is that which is fitting towards every one. It is a just charge against the English nation, considered generally, that they do not know how to be kind, courteous, and considerate of the feelings of others. It is their character throughout Europe. They have much to learn from other nations in the arts not only of being serviceable and amiable with grace, but of being so at all. Whatever brings the habitual feelings of human beings to one another nearer to the Christian standard, will produce a better demeanour to every one, and therefore to the poor. But it is not peculiarly towards them that the deficiency manifests itself. On the contrary, speaking of the rich individually (as distinguished from collective conduct

in public life), there is generally, we believe, a very sincere desire to be amiable to the poor.

Where there exists the quality, so rare in England, of genuine sociability, combined with as much knowledge of the feelings and ways of the working classes as can enable any one to show interest in them to any useful purpose, the effects obtained are even now very valuable. The author of the 'Claims of Labour' has done a useful thing by giving additional publicity to the proceedings of a generous and right-minded mill-owner, whom he does not name, but who is known to be Mr. Samuel Greg, from whose letters to Mr. Leonard Horner he has quoted largely. Mr. Greg proceeded partly in the obvious course of building good cottages, granting garden allotments, establishing schools, and so forth. But the essence of his plan consisted in becoming personally acquainted with the operatives, showing interest in their pursuits, taking part in their social amusements, and giving to the *élite* of them—men, women, and young persons—periodical access to the society and intercourse of his own home. He has afforded a specimen and model of what can be done for the people under the calumniated Factory System. And in nothing is he more to be commended, than in the steadiness with which he upholds the one essential principle of all effectual philanthropy. 'The motto on our flag,' says he, 'is *Aide-toi, le ciel t'aidera.* It is the principle I endeavour to keep constantly in view. It is the only principle on which it is safe to help anybody, or which can prevent benevolence from being poisoned into a fountain of moral mischief.' His experiment has, for many years, been well rewarded by success. But, for

the cure of great social evils, too great stress must not be laid upon it. The originator of such a scheme is, most likely, a person peculiarly fitted by natural and acquired qualifications for winning the confidence and attachment of untutored minds. If the spirit should diffuse itself widely among the employers of labour, there might be, in every large neighbourhood, some such man; we could never expect that the majority would be such. Even Mr. Greg had to begin, as he tells us, by *selecting* his labourers. He had to 'get rid of his aborigines.' He 'endeavoured, as far as possible, to find such families as we knew to be respectable, or thought likely to be so, and who, we hoped, if they were made comfortable, would remain and settle upon the place; thus finding and making themselves a home, and losing by degrees that restless and migratory spirit which is one of the peculiar characteristics of the manufacturing population, and perhaps the greatest of all obstacles in the way of permanent improvement among them.' It is in the nature of things that employers so much beyond the average should gather round them better labourers than the average, and retain them, while so eligible a lot is not to be had elsewhere. But ordinary human nature is so poor a thing, that the same attachment and influence would not, with the same certainty, attend similar conduct, if it no longer formed a contrast with the indifference of other employers. The gratitude of men is for things unusual and unexpected. This does not take from the value of Mr. Greg's exertions. Whoever succeeds in improving a certain number of the working people, does so much towards raising the class; and all such good influences have a

tendency to spread. But, for creating a permanent tie between employers and employed, we must not count upon the results manifested in cases of exception, which would probably lose a part of their beneficial efficacy if they became the rule.

If, on a subject on which almost every thinker has his Utopia, we might be permitted to have ours; if we might point to the principle on which, at some distant date, we place our chief hope for healing the widening breach between those who toil and those who live on the produce of former toil; it would be that of raising the labourer from a receiver of hire —a mere bought instrument in the work of production, having no residuary interest in the work itself—to the position of being, in some sort, a partner in it. The plan of remunerating subordinates in whom trust must be reposed, by a commission on the returns instead of only a fixed salary, is already familiar in mercantile concerns, on the ground of its utility to the employer. The wisdom, even in a worldly sense, of associating the interest of the agent with the end he is employed to attain, is so universally recognised in theory, that it is not chimerical to expect it may one day be more extensively exemplified in practice. In some form of this policy we see the only, or the most practicable, means of harmonizing the 'rights of industry' and those of property; of making the employers the real chiefs of the people, leading and guiding them in a work in which they also are interested—a work of co-operation, not of mere hiring and service; and justifying, by the superior capacity in which they contribute to

the work, the higher remuneration which they receive for their share of it.

But without carrying our view forward to changes of manners, or changes in the relation of the different orders of society to one another, let us consider what can be done immediately, and by the legislature, to improve either the bodily or mental condition of the labouring people.

And let it here be remembered that we have to do with a class, a large portion of which reads, discusses, and forms opinions on public interests. Let it be remembered also, that we live in a political age; in which the desire of political rights, or the abuse of political privileges by the possessors of them, are the foremost ideas in the minds of most reading men—an age, too, the whole spirit of which instigates every one to demand fair play for helping himself, rather than to seek or expect help from others. In such an age, and in the treatment of minds so predisposed, justice is the one needful thing rather than kindness. We may at least say that kindness will be little appreciated, will have very little of the effect of kindness upon the objects of it, so long as injustice, or what they cannot but deem to be injustice, is persevered in. Apply this to several of the laws maintained by our legislature. Apply it, for example, to the Corn-Laws. Will the poor thank you for giving them money in alms; for subscribing to build baths and lay out parks for them, or, as Lord John Manners proposes, playing at cricket with them, if you are at the same time taxing their bread to swell your rents? We could understand persons who said—the people will not be better

off whatever we do, and why should we sacrifice our rents or open our purses for so meagre a result? But we cannot understand men who give alms with one hand, and take away the bread of the labourer with the other. Can they wonder that the people say—Instead of doling out to us a small fragment of what is rightfully our own, why do you not disgorge your unjust gains? One of the evils of the matter is, that the gains are so enormously exaggerated. Those who have studied the question know that the landlords gain very little by the Corn-Laws; and would soon have even that little restored to them by the indirect consequences of the abrogation. The rankling sense of gross injustice, which renders any approximation of feeling between the classes impossible while even the remembrance of it lasts, is inflicted for a quite insignificant pecuniary advantage.

There are some other practices which, if the new doctrines are embraced in earnest, will require to be reconsidered. For example, it seems to us that mixing in the social assemblies of the country people, and joining in their sports, would assort exceedingly ill with the preserving of game. If cricketing is to be taken in common by rich and poor, why not shooting? We confess that when we read of enormous game preserves, kept up that great personages may slaughter hundreds of wild animals in a day's shooting, we are amazed at the puerility of taste which can call this a sport; as much as we lament the want of just feeling which, for the sake of sport, can keep open from generation to generation this source of crime and bitterness in the class which it is now so much the fashion to patronize.

We must needs think, also, that there is something out of joint, when so much is said of the value of refining and humanizing tastes, to the labouring people —when it is proposed to plant parks and lay out gardens for them, that they may enjoy more freely nature's gift alike to rich and poor, of sun, sky, and vegetation; and along with this a counter-progress is constantly going on of stopping up paths and enclosing commons. Is not this another case of giving with one hand and taking back more largely with the other? We look with the utmost jealousy upon any further enclosure of commons. In the greater part of this island, exclusive of the mountain and moor districts, there certainly is not more land remaining in a state of natural wildness than is desirable. Those who would make England resemble many parts of the Continent, where every foot of soil is hemmed in by fences and covered over with the traces of human labour, should remember that where this is done, it is done for the use and benefit, not of the rich, but of the poor; and that in the countries where there remain no commons, the rich have no parks. The common is the peasant's park. Every argument for ploughing it up to raise more produce, applies *à fortiori* to the park, which is generally far more fertile. The effect of either, when done in the manner proposed, is only to make the poor more numerous, not better off. But what ought to be said when, as so often happens, the common is taken from the poor, that the whole or great part of it may be added to the enclosed pleasure domain of the rich? Is the miserable compensation, and though miserable not always granted, of a small scrap of the land to each of the cottagers

who had a goose on the common, any equivalent to the poor generally, to the lovers of nature, or to future generations, for this legalized spoliation?

These are things to be avoided. Among things to be done, the most obvious is to remove every restriction, every artificial hindrance, which legal and fiscal systems oppose to the attempts of the labouring classes to forward their own improvement. These hindrances are sometimes to be found in quarters in which they may not be looked for; as a few instances will show.

Some years ago the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, in a well-intended tract addressed to the working people, to correct the prejudices entertained by some of them against the 'claims of capital,' gave some advice to the labourers, which produced considerable comment at the time. It exhorted them to 'make themselves capitalists.' To most labouring people who read it, this exhortation probably appeared ironical. But some of the more intelligent of the class found a meaning in it. It did occur to them that there was a mode in which they could make themselves capitalists. Not, of course, individually; but by bringing their small means into a common fund, by forming a numerous partnership or joint stock, they could, as it seemed to them, become their own employers—dispense with the agency of receivers of profit, and share among themselves the entire produce of their labour. This was a most desirable experiment. It would have been an excellent thing to have ascertained whether any great industrial enterprise, a manufactory for example, could be successfully carried on upon this principle. If it suc-

ceeded, the benefit was obvious; if, after sufficient trial, it was found impracticable, its failure also would be a valuable lesson. It would prove to the operatives that the profits of the employer are but the necessary price paid for the superiority of management produced by the stimulus of individual interest; and that if the capitalist be the costliest part of the machinery of production, he more than repays his cost. But it was found that the defects of the law of partnership, as applicable to numerous associations, presented difficulties rendering it impracticable to give this experiment a fair trial. Here, then, is a thing which Parliament might do for the labouring classes. The framing of a good law of Partnership, giving every attainable facility to the formation of large industrial capitals by the aggregation of small savings, would be a real boon. It would be the removal of no ideal grievance, but of one which we know to be felt, and felt deeply, by the most intelligent and right-thinking of the class—those who are most fitted to acquire, and best qualified to exercise, a beneficent influence over the rest.

Again, it is often complained of, as one of the saddest features of the constitution of society in the rural districts, that the class of yeomanry has died out; that there is no longer any intermediate connecting link between the mere labourer and the large farmer—no class somewhat above his own, into which, by industry and frugality, a labourer can hope to rise; that if he makes savings, they are less a benefit to him than a burden and an anxiety, from the absence of any local means of investment; unless indeed by becoming a shopkeeper in a town or village,

where an additional shop is probably not wanted, where he has to form new habits, with great risk of failure, and, if he succeeds, does not remain an example and encouragement to others like himself. Is it not strange, then, that supposing him to have an opportunity of investing this money in a little patch of land, the Stamp-office would interfere and take a toll on the transaction? The tax, too, which the State levies on the transfer of small properties, is a trifling matter compared with the tax levied by the lawyers. The stamp-duty bears some proportion to the pecuniary amount; but the law charges are the same on the smallest transactions as on the greatest, and these are almost wholly occasioned by the defects of the law. There is no real reason why the transfer of land should be more difficult or costly than the transfer of three per cent stock, except that more of description is necessary to identify the subject-matter; all the rest is the consequence of mere technicalities, growing out of the obsolete incidents of the Feudal System.

Many of the removable causes of ill-health are in the power of Government; but there is no need to enlarge upon a subject to which official Reports have drawn so much attention. The more effectual performance by Government of any of its acknowledged duties; the more zealous prosecution of any scheme tending to the general advantage, is beneficial to the labouring classes. Of schemes destined specially to give them employment, or add to their comforts, it may be said, once for all, that there is a simple test by which to judge them. Is the assistance of such a kind, and given in such a manner, as to render them

ultimately independent of the continuance of similar assistance? If not, the best that can be said of the plans is, that they are harmless. To make them useful, it is an indispensable condition that there be a reasonable prospect of their being at some future time self-supporting. Even upon the best supposition, it appears to us that too much importance is attached to them. Given education and just laws, the poorer class would be as competent as any other class to take care of their own personal habits and requirements.

GUIZOT'S ESSAYS AND LECTURES ON HISTORY.*

THESE two works are the contributions which the present Minister for Foreign Affairs in France has hitherto made to the philosophy of general history. They are but fragments: the earlier of the two is a collection of detached Essays, and therefore of necessity fragmentary; while the later is all that the public possesses, or perhaps is destined to possess, of a systematic work cut short in an early stage of its progress. It would be unreasonable to lament that the exigencies or the temptations of politics have called from authorship and the Professor's Chair to the Chamber of Deputies and the Cabinet, the man to whom perhaps more than to any other it is owing that Europe is now at peace. Yet we cannot forbear wishing that this great service to the civilized world had been the achievement of some other, and that M. Guizot had been allowed to complete his 'Cours d'Histoire Moderne.' For this a very moderate amount of leisure would probably suffice. For though M. Guizot has written only on a portion of his subject, he has done it in the manner of one to whom the whole is familiar. There is a consistency, a coherence, a comprehensiveness, and what the Germans would term many-sidedness, in his view of European history; together with a full possession of the facts which have any important bearing upon his conclu-

* *Edinburgh Review*, October 1845.

sions; and a deliberateness, a matureness, an entire absence of haste or crudity, in his explanations of historical phenomena; which we never see in writers who form their theories as they go on—which give evidence of a general scheme, so well wrought out and digested beforehand, that the labours both of research and of thought necessary for the whole work, seem to have been performed before any part was committed to paper. Little beyond the mere operation of composition seems to be requisite, to place before us, as a connected body of thought, speculations which, even in their unfinished state, may be ranked with the most valuable contributions yet made to universal history.

Of these speculations no account, having any pretensions to completeness, has ever, so far as we are aware, appeared in the English language. We shall attempt to do something towards supplying the deficiency. To suppose that this is no longer needful would be to presume too much on the supposed universality of the French language among our reading public; and on the acquaintance even of those to whom the language opposes no difficulty, with the names and reputation of the standard works of contemporaneous French thought. We believe that a knowledge of M. Guizot's writings is even now not a common possession in this country, and that it is by no means a superfluous service to inform English readers of what they may expect to find there.

For it is not with speculations of this kind as it is with those for which there exists in this country a confirmed and long-established taste. What is done in France or elsewhere for the advancement of

Chemistry or of Mathematics, is immediately known and justly appreciated by the mathematicians and chemists of Great Britain. For these are recognised sciences, the chosen occupation of many instructed minds, ever on the watch for any accession of facts or ideas in the department which they cultivate. But the interest which historical studies in this country inspire, is not as yet of a scientific character. History with us has not passed that stage in which its cultivation is an affair of mere literature or of erudition, not of science. It is studied for the facts, not for the explanation of facts. It excites an imaginative, or a biographical, or an antiquarian, but not a philosophical interest. Historical facts are hardly yet felt to be, like other natural phenomena, amenable to scientific laws. The characteristic distrust of our countrymen for all ambitious efforts of intellect, of which the success does not admit of being instantly tested by a decisive application to practice, causes all widely extended views on the explanation of history to be looked upon with a suspicion surpassing the bounds of reasonable caution, and of which the natural result is indifference. And hence we remain in contented ignorance of the best writings which the nations of the Continent have in our time produced; because we have no faith in, and no curiosity about, the kind of speculations to which the most philosophic minds of those nations have lately devoted themselves; even when distinguished, as in the case before us, by a sobriety and a judicious reserve, borrowed from the safest and most cautious school of inductive inquirers.

In this particular, the difference between the

English and the Continental mind forces itself upon us in every province of their respective literatures. Certain conceptions of history considered as a whole, some notions of a progressive unfolding of the capabilities of humanity—of a tendency of man and society towards some distant result—of a *destination*, as it were, of humanity—pervade, in its whole extent, the popular literature of France. Every newspaper, every literary review or magazine, bears witness of such notions. They are always turning up accidentally, when the writer is ostensibly engaged with something else; or showing themselves as a background behind the opinions which he is immediately maintaining. When the writer's mind is not of a high order, these notions are crude and vague; but they are evidentiary of a tone of thought which has prevailed so long among the superior intellects, as to have spread from them to others, and become the general property of the nation. Nor is this true only of France, and of the nations of Southern Europe which take their tone from France, but almost equally, though under somewhat different forms, of the Germanic nations. It was Lessing by whom the course of history was styled 'the education of the human race.' Among the earliest of those by whom the succession of historical events was conceived as a subject of science, were Herder and Kant. The latest school of German metaphysicians, the Hegelians, are well known to treat of it as a science which might even be constructed *à priori*. And as on other subjects, so on this, the general literature of Germany borrows both its ideas and its tone from the schools of the highest philosophy. We need hardly say that in our own country nothing of

all this is true. The speculations of our thinkers, and the commonplaces of our mere writers and talkers, are of quite another description.

Even insular England belongs, however, to the commonwealth of Europe, and yields, though slowly and in a way of her own, to the general impulse of the European mind. There are signs of a nascent tendency in English thought to turn itself towards speculations on history. The tendency first showed itself in some of the minds which had received their earliest impulse from Mr. Coleridge; and an example has been given in a quarter where many, perhaps, would have least expected it—by the Oxford school of theologians. However little ambitious these writers may be of the title of philosophers; however anxious to sink the character of science in that of religion—they yet have, after their own fashion, a philosophy of history. They have a theory of the world—in our opinion an erroneous one, but of which they recognise as an essential condition that it shall explain history; and they do attempt to explain history by it, and have constituted, on the basis of it, a kind of historical system. By this we cannot but think that they have done much good, if only in contributing to impose a similar necessity upon all theorizers of like pretensions. We believe the time must come when all systems which aspire to direct either the consciences of mankind, or their political and social arrangements, will be required to show not only that they are consistent with universal history, but that they afford a more reasonable explanation of it than any other system. In the philosophy of society, more especially, we look upon history as an

indispensable test and verifier of all doctrines and creeds; and we regard with proportionate interest all explanations, however partial, of any important part of the series of historical phenomena—all attempts, which are in any measure successful, to disentangle the complications of those phenomena, to detect the order of their causation, and exhibit any portion of them in an unbroken series, each link cemented by natural laws with those which precede and follow it.

M. Guizot's is one of the most successful of these partial efforts. His subject is not history at large, but modern European history; the formation and progress of the existing nations of Europe. Embracing, therefore, only a part of the succession of historical events, he is precluded from attempting to determine the law or laws which preside over the entire evolution. If there be such laws; if the series of states through which human nature and society are destined to pass, have been determined more or less precisely by the original constitution of mankind, and by the circumstances of the planet on which we live; the order of their succession cannot be discovered by modern or by European experience alone: it must be ascertained by a conjunct analysis, so far as possible, of the whole of history, and the whole of human nature. M. Guizot stops short of this ambitious enterprise; but, considered as preparatory studies for promoting and facilitating it, his writings are most valuable. He seeks, not the ultimate, but the proximate causes of the facts of modern history; he inquires in what manner each successive condition of modern Europe grew out of that which next preceded it; and how modern society altogether, and the modern mind,

shaped themselves from the elements which had been transmitted to them from the ancient world. To have done this with any degree of success, is no trifling achievement.

The Lectures, which are the principal foundation of M. Guizot's literary fame, were delivered by him in the years 1828, 1829, and 1830, at the old Sorbonne, now the seat of the *Faculté des Lettres* of Paris, on alternate days with MM. Cousin and Villemain; a triad of lecturers, whose brilliant exhibitions, the crowds which thronged their lecture-rooms, and the stir they excited in the active and aspiring minds so numerous among the French youth, the future historian will commemorate as among the remarkable appearances of that important era. The 'Essays on the History of France' are the substance of Lectures delivered by M. Guizot many years earlier; before the Bourbons, in their jealousy of all free speculation, had shut up his class-room and abolished his professorship; which was re-established after seven years' interval by the Martignac Ministry. In this earlier production some topics are discussed at length, which, in the subsequent Lectures, are either not touched upon, or much more summarily disposed of. Among these is the highly interesting subject of the first Essay. The wide difference between M. Guizot and preceding historians is marked in the first words of his first book. A real thinker is shown in nothing more certainly, than in the questions which he asks. The fact which stands at the commencement of M. Guizot's subject—which is the origin and foundation of all subsequent history—the fall of the Roman Empire—he found an unexplained phenomenon;

unless a few generalities about despotism and immorality and luxury can be called explanation. His Essay opens as follows:—

'The fall of the Roman Empire of the West offers a singular phenomenon. Not only the people fail to support the government in its struggle against the Barbarians; but the nation, abandoned to itself, does not attempt, even on its own account, any resistance. More than this—nothing discloses that a nation exists; scarcely even is our attention called to what it suffers: it undergoes all the horrors of war, pillage, famine, a total change of its condition and destiny, without giving, either by word or deed, any sign of life.

'This phenomenon is not only singular, but unexampled. Despotism has existed elsewhere than in the Roman Empire: more than once, after countries had been long oppressed by it, foreign invasion and conquest have spread destruction over them. Even when the nation has not resisted, its existence is manifested in history; it suffers, complains, and, in spite of its degradation, maintains some struggle against its misery: narratives and monuments attest what it underwent, what became of it, and if not its own acts, the acts of others in regard to it.

'In the fifth century, the remnant of the Roman legions disputes with hordes of Barbarians the immense territory of the Empire; but it seems as if that territory was a desert. The Imperial troops once driven out or defeated, all seems over: one barbarous tribe wrests the province from another; these excepted, the only existence which shows itself is that of the bishops and clergy. If we had not the laws to testify to us that a Roman population still occupied the soil, history would leave us doubtful of it.

'This total disappearance of the people is more especially observable in the provinces most advanced in civilization, and longest subject to Rome. The Letter called 'The Groans of the Britons,' addressed to Ætius, and imploring, with bitter lamentations, the aid of a legion, has been looked upon as a

monument of the helplessness and meanness of spirit into which the subjects of the Empire had fallen. This is unjust. The Britons, less civilized, less Romanized than the other subjects of Rome, did resist the Saxons; and their resistance has a history. At the same epoch, in the same situation, the Italians, the Gauls, the Spaniards, have none. The Empire withdrew from those countries, the Barbarians occupied them, and the mass of the inhabitants took not the slightest part, nor marked their place in any manner in the events which gave them up to so great calamities.

'And yet, Gaul, Italy, and Spain, were covered with towns, which but lately had been rich and populous. Roads, aqueducts, amphitheatres, schools, they possessed in abundance; they were wanting in nothing which gives evidence of wealth, and procures for a people a brilliant and animated existence. The Barbarians came to plunder these riches, disperse these aggregations, destroy these pleasures. Never was the existence of a nation more utterly subverted; never had individuals to endure more evils in the present, more terrors for the future. Whence came it that these nations were mute and lifeless? Why have so many towns sacked, so many fortunes reversed, so many plans of life overthrown, so many proprietors dispossessed, left so few traces, not merely of the active resistance of the people, but even of their sufferings?

'The causes assigned are, the despotism of the Imperial government, the degradation of the people, the profound apathy which had seized upon all the governed. And this is true; such was really the main cause of so extraordinary an effect. But it is not enough to enunciate, in these general terms, a cause which has existed elsewhere without producing the same results. We must penetrate deeper into the condition of Roman society, such as despotism had made it. We must examine by what means despotism had so completely stripped society of all coherence and all life. Despotism has various forms and modes of proceeding, which give very various degrees of energy to its action, and of extensiveness to its consequences.'

Such a problem M. Guizot proposes to himself; and is it not remarkable that this question not only was not answered, but was not so much as raised, by the celebrated writers who had treated this period of history before him—one of those writers being Gibbon? The difference between what we learn from Gibbon on this subject, and what we learn from Guizot, is a measure of the progress of historical inquiry in the intervening period. Even the true sources of history, of all that is most important in it, have never until the present generation been really understood and freely resorted to. It is not in the chronicles, but in the laws, that M. Guizot finds the clue to the immediate agency in the 'decline and fall' of the Roman empire. In the legislation of the period M. Guizot discovers, under the name of *curiales*, the middle class of the Empire, and the recorded evidences of its progressive annihilation.

It is known that the free inhabitants of Roman Europe were almost exclusively a town population: it is, then, in the institutions and condition of the municipalities that the real state of the inhabitants of the Roman empire must be studied.

In semblance, the constitution of the town communities was of a highly popular character. The *curiales*, or the class liable to serve municipal offices, consisted of all the inhabitants (not specially exempted) who possessed landed property amounting to twenty-five *jugera*. This class formed a corporation for the management of local affairs. They discharged their functions, partly as a collective body, partly by electing, and filling in rotation, the various municipal magistracies. Notwithstanding the apparent dignity and

authority with which this body was invested, the list of exemptions consisted of all the classes who possessed any influence in the State, any real participation in the governing power. It comprised, first, all senatorial families, and all persons whom the Emperor had honoured with the title of *clarissimi:* then, all the clergy, all the military, from the *præfectus prætorii* down to the common legionary, and all the civil functionaries of the State. When we look further, indications still more significant make their appearance. We find that there was an unceasing struggle between the government and the *curiales*—on their part to escape from their condition, on the part of the government to retain them in it. It was found necessary to circumscribe them by every species of artificial restriction. They were interdicted from living out of the town, from serving in the army, or holding any civil employment which conferred exemption from municipal offices, until they had first served all those offices, from the lowest to what was called the highest. Even then, their emancipation was only personal, not extending to their children. If they entered the Church, they must abandon their possessions, either to the *curia* (the municipality), or to some individual who would become a *curialis* in their room. Laws after laws were enacted for detecting, and bringing back to the *curia*, those who had secretly quitted it and entered surreptitiously into the army, the clergy, or some public office. They could not absent themselves, even for a time, without the permission of superior authority; and if they succeeded in escaping, their property was forfeit to the *curia*. No *curialis*, without leave from the governor of the province, could

sell the property which constituted him such. If his heirs were not members of the *curia*, or if his widow or daughter married any one not a *curialis*, one-fourth of their property must be relinquished. If he had no children, only one-fourth could be bequeathed by will, the remainder passing to the *curia*. The law looked forward to the case of properties abandoned by the possessor, and made provision that they should devolve upon the *curia;* and that the taxes to which they were liable should be rateably charged upon the property of the other *curiales*.

What was it, in the situation of a *curialis*, which made his condition so irksome, that nothing could keep men in it unless caged up as in a dungeon—unless every hole or cranny by which they could creep out of it, was tightly closed by the provident ingenuity of the legislator?

The explanation is this. Not only were the *curiales* burdened with all the expenses of the local administration, beyond what could be defrayed from the property of the *curia* itself—property continually encroached upon, and often confiscated, by the general government; but they had also to collect the revenue of the State; and their own property was responsible for making up its amount. This it was which rendered the condition of a *curialis* an object of dread; which progressively impoverished and finally extinguished the class. In their fate, we see what disease the Roman empire really died of; and how its destruction had been consummated even before the occupation by the Barbarians. The invasions were no new fact, unheard-of until the fifth century; such attempts had been repeatedly made, and never succeeded until

the powers of resistance were destroyed by inward decay. The Empire perished of misgovernment, in the form of over-taxation. The burden, ever increasing through the necessities occasioned by the impoverishment it had already produced, at last reached this point, that none but those whom a legal exemption had removed out of the class on which the weight principally fell, had anything remaining to lose. The senatorial houses possessed that privilege, and accordingly we still find, at the period of the successful invasions, a certain number of families which had escaped the general wreck of private fortunes;—opulent families, with large landed possessions and numerous slaves. Between these and the mass of the population there existed no tie of affection, no community of interest. With this exception, and that of the Church, all was poverty. The middle class had sunk under its burdens. 'Hence,' says M. Guizot, 'in the fifth century, so much land lying waste, so many towns almost depopulated, or filled only with a hungry and unoccupied rabble. The system of government which I have described, contributed much more to this result than the ravages of the Barbarians.'

In this situation the northern invaders found the Roman empire. What they made of it, is the next subject of M. Guizot's investigations. The Essays which follow are, 'On the origin and establishment of the Franks in Gaul'—'Causes of the fall of the Merovingians and Carlovingians'—'Social state and political institutions of France, under the Merovingians and Carlovingians'—'Political character of the feudal *régime*.' But on these subjects our author's later and more mature thoughts are found in his Lectures; and

we shall therefore pass at once to the more recent work, returning afterwards to the concluding Essay in the earlier volume, which bears this interesting title: 'Causes of the establishment of a representative system in England.'

The subject of the Lectures being the history of European Civilization, M. Guizot begins with a dissertation on the different meanings of that indefinite term; and announces that he intends to use it as an equivalent to a state of improvement and progression, in the physical condition and social relations of mankind, on the one hand, and in their inward spiritual development on the other. We have not space to follow him into this discussion, with which, were we disposed to criticize, we might find some fault; but which ought, assuredly, to have exempted him from the imputation of looking upon the improvement of mankind as consisting in the progress of social institutions alone. We shall quote a passage near the conclusion of the same Lecture, as a specimen of the moral and philosophical spirit which pervades the work, and because it contains a truth for which we are glad to cite M. Guizot as an authority:—

'I think that in the course of our survey we shall speedily become convinced that civilization is still very young; that the world is very far from having measured the extent of the career which is before it. Assuredly, human conception is far from being, as yet, all that it is capable of becoming; we are far from being able to embrace in imagination the whole future of humanity. Nevertheless, let each of us descend into his own thoughts, let him question himself as to the possible good which he comprehends and hopes for, and then confront his idea with what is realized in the world; he will be satis-

fied that society and civilization are in a very early stage of their progress; that in spite of all they have accomplished, they have incomparably more still to achieve.'

The second Lecture is devoted to a general speculation, which is very characteristic of M. Guizot's mode of thought, and, in our opinion, worthy to be attentively weighed both by the philosophers and the practical politicians of the age.

He observes, that one of the points of difference by which modern civilization is most distinguished from ancient, is the complication, the multiplicity, which characterizes it. In all previous forms of society, Oriental, Greek, or Roman, there is a remarkable character of unity and simplicity. Some one idea seems to have presided over the construction of the social framework, and to have been carried out into all its consequences, without encountering on the way any counterbalancing or limiting principle. Some one element, some one power in society, seems to have early attained predominance, and extinguished all other agencies which could exercise an influence over society capable of conflicting with its own. In Egypt, for example, the theocratic principle absorbed everything. The temporal government was grounded on the uncontrolled rule of a caste of priests; and the moral life of the people was built upon the idea, that it belonged to the interpreters of religion to direct the whole detail of human actions. The dominion of an exclusive class, at once the ministers of religion and the sole possessors of letters and secular learning, has impressed its character on all which survives of Egyptian monuments—on all we know of Egyptian life. Elsewhere, the dominant fact was the supremacy

of a military caste, or race of conquerors: the institutions and habits of society were principally modelled by the necessity of maintaining this supremacy. In other places, again, society was mainly the expression of the democratic principle. The sovereignty of the majority, and the equal participation of all male citizens in the administration of the State, were the leading facts by which the aspect of those societies was determined. This singleness in the governing principle had not, indeed, always prevailed in those states. Their early history often presented a conflict of forces. 'Among the Egyptians, the Etruscans, even among the Greeks, the caste of warriors, for example, maintained a struggle with that of priests; elsewhere' (in ancient Gaul, for example) 'the spirit of clanship against that of voluntary association; or the aristocratic against the popular principle. But these contests were nearly confined to ante-historical periods; a vague remembrance was all that survived of them. If at a later period the struggle was renewed, it was almost always promptly terminated; one of the rival powers achieved an early victory, and took exclusive possession of society.

'This remarkable simplicity of most of the ancient civilizations, had, in different places, different results. Sometimes, as in Greece, it produced a most rapid development: never did any people unfold itself so brilliantly in so short a time. But after this wonderful outburst, Greece appeared to have become suddenly exhausted. Her decline, if not so rapid as her elevation, was yet strangely prompt. It seemed as though the creative force of the principle of Greek civilization had spent itself, and no other principle came to its assistance.

'Elsewhere, in Egypt and India for example, the unity of

the dominant principle had a different effect; society fell into a stationary state. Simplicity produced monotony: the State did not fall into dissolution; society continued to subsist, but immovable, and as it were congealed.'

It was otherwise, says M. Guizot, with modern Europe.

'Her civilization,' he continues, 'is confused, diversified, stormy: all forms, all principles of social organization co-exist; spiritual and temporal authority, theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, democratic elements, every variety of classes and social conditions, are mixed and crowded together; there are innumerable gradations of liberty, wealth, and influence. And these forces are in a state of perpetual conflict, nor has any of them ever been able to stifle the others, and establish its own exclusive authority. Modern Europe offers examples of all systems, of all attempts at social organization; monarchies pure and mixed, theocracies, republics more or less aristocratic, have existed simultaneously one beside another; and, in spite of their diversity, they have all a certain homogeneity, a family likeness, not to be mistaken.

'In ideas and sentiments, the same variety, the same struggle. Theocratic, monarchic, aristocratic, popular creeds, check, limit, and modify one another. Even in the most audacious writings of the middle ages, an idea is never followed to its ultimate consequences. The partisans of absolute power unconsciously shrink from the results of their doctrine; democrats are under similar restraints. One sees that there are ideas and influences encompassing them, which do not suffer them to go all lengths. There is none of that imperturbable hardihood, that blindness of logic, which we find in the ancient world. In the feelings of mankind, the same contrasts, the same multiplicity: a most energetic love of independence, along with a great facility of submission; a rare fidelity of man to man, and at the same time an imperious impulse to follow each his own will, to resist restraint, to live for himself, without taking account of others. A similar cha-

racter shows itself in modern literatures. In perfection of form and artistic beauty, they are far inferior to the ancient; but richer and more copious in respect of sentiments and ideas. One perceives that human nature has been stirred up to a greater depth, and at a greater number of points. The imperfections of form are an effect of this very cause. The more abundant the materials, the more difficult it is to marshal them into a symmetrical and harmonious shape.'*

Hence, he continues, the modern world, while inferior to many of the ancient forms of human life in the characteristic excellence of each, yet in all things taken together, is richer and more developed than any of them. From the multitude of elements to be reconciled, each of which during long ages spent the greater part of its strength in combating the rest, the progress of modern civilization has necessarily been slower; but it has lasted, and remained steadily progressive, through fifteen centuries; which no other civilization has ever done.

There are some to whom this will appear a fanciful theory, a cobweb spun from the brain of a *doctrinaire*. We are of a different opinion. There is doubtless, in the historical statement, some of that pardonable exaggeration, which in the exposition of large and commanding views, the necessities of language render it so difficult entirely to avoid. The assertion that the civilizations of the ancient world were each under the complete ascendancy of some one exclusive principle, is not admissible in the unqualified sense in which M. Guizot enunciates it; the limitations which that assertion would require, on a nearer view, are neither few nor inconsiderable. Still less is it maintainable, that

* Vol. i. Lecture 2.

different societies, under different dominant principles, did not at each epoch co-exist in the closest contact; as Athens, Sparta, and Persia or Macedonia; Rome, Carthage, and the East. But after allowance for overstatement, the substantial truth of the doctrine appears unimpeachable. No one of the ancient forms of society contained in itself that systematic antagonism, which we believe to be the only condition under which stability and progressiveness can be permanently reconciled to one another.

There are in society a number of distinct forces—of separate and independent sources of power. There is the general power of knowledge and cultivated intelligence. There is the power of religion; by which, speaking politically, is to be understood that of religious teachers. There is the power of military skill and discipline. There is the power of wealth; the power of numbers and physical force; and several others might be added. Each of these, by the influence it exercises over society, is fruitful of certain kinds of beneficial results; none of them is favourable to all kinds. There is no one of these powers which, if it could make itself absolute, and deprive the others of all influence except in aid of, and in subordination to, its own, would not show itself the enemy of some of the essential constituents of human well-being. Certain good results would be doubtless obtained, at least for a time; some of the interests of society would be adequately cared for; because, with certain of them, the natural tendency of each of these powers spontaneously coincides. But there would be other interests, in greater number, which the complete ascendancy of any one of these social elements would

leave unprovided for; and which must depend for their protection on the influence which can be exercised by other elements.

We believe with M. Guizot, that modern Europe presents the only example in history, of the maintenance, through many ages, of this co-ordinate action among rival powers naturally tending in different directions. And, with him, we ascribe chiefly to this cause the spirit of improvement, which has never ceased to exist, and still makes progress, in the European nations. At no time has Europe been free from a contest of rival powers for dominion over society. If the clergy had succeeded, as in Egypt, in making the kings subservient to them; if, as among the Mussulmans of old, or the Russians now, the supreme religious authority had merged in the attributes of the temporal ruler; if the military and feudal nobility had reduced the clergy to be their tools, and retained the burgesses as their serfs; if a commercial aristocracy, as at Tyre, Carthage, and Venice, had got rid of kings, and governed by a military force composed of foreign mercenaries; Europe would have arrived much more rapidly at such kinds and degrees of national greatness and well-being as those influences severally tended to promote; but from that time would either have stagnated, like the great stationary despotisms of the East, or have perished for lack of such other elements of civilization as could sufficiently unfold themselves only under some other patronage. Nor is this a danger existing only in the past; but one which may be yet impending over the future. If the perpetual antagonism which has kept the human mind alive, were to give place to the complete prepon-

derance of any, even the most salutary, element, we might yet find that we have counted too confidently upon the progressiveness which we are so often told is an inherent property of our species. Education, for example—mental culture—would seem to have a better title than could be derived from anything else, to rule the world with exclusive authority; yet if the lettered and cultivated class, embodied and disciplined under a central organ, could become in Europe, what it is in China, the Government—unchecked by any power residing in the mass of citizens, and permitted to assume a parental tutelage over all the operations of life—the result would probably be a darker despotism, one more opposed to improvement, than even the military monarchies and aristocracies have in fact proved. And in like manner, if what seems to be the tendency of things in the United States should proceed for some generations unrestrained; if the power of numbers—of the opinions and instincts of the mass—should acquire and retain the absolute government of society, and impose silence upon all voices which dissent from its decisions or dispute its authority; we should expect that, in such countries, the condition of human nature would become as stationary as in China, and perhaps at a still lower point of elevation in the scale.

However these things may be, and imperfectly as many of the elements have yet unfolded themselves which are hereafter to compose the civilization of the modern world; there is no doubt that it has always possessed, in comparison with the older forms of life and society, that complex and manifold character which M. Guizot ascribes to it.

He proceeds to inquire whether any explanation of this peculiarity of the European nations can be traced in their origin; and he finds, in fact, that origin to be extremely multifarious. The European world shaped itself from a chaos, in which Roman, Christian, and Barbarian ingredients were commingled. M. Guizot attempts to determine what portion of the elements of modern life derived their beginning from each of these sources.

From the Roman Empire, he finds that Europe derived both the fact and the idea of municipal institutions; a thing unknown to the Germanic conquerors. The Roman Empire was originally an aggregation of towns; the life of the people, especially in the Western Empire, was a town life; their institutions and social arrangements, except the system of functionaries destined to maintain the authority of the sovereign, were all grounded upon the towns. When the central power retired from the Western Empire, town life and town institutions, though in an enfeebled condition, were what remained. In Italy, where they were less enfeebled than elsewhere, civilization revived not only earlier than in the rest of Europe, but in forms more similar to those of the ancient world. The South of France had, next to Italy, partaken most in the fruits of Roman civilization; its towns had been the richest and most flourishing on this side the Alps; and having, therefore, held out longer than those farther north against the fiscal tyranny of the Empire, were not so completely ruined when the conquest took place. Accordingly, their municipal institutions were transmitted unbroken from the Roman period to recent times. This, then, was one legacy which the Empire

left to the nations which were shaped out of its ruins. But it left also, though not a central authority, the habit of requiring and looking for such an authority. It left 'the idea of the empire, the name of the emperor, the conception of the imperial majesty, of a sacred power inherent in the imperial name.' This idea, at no time becoming extinct, resumed, as society became more settled, a portion of its pristine power: towards the close of the middle ages, we find it once more a really influential element. Finally, Rome left a body of written law, constructed by and for a wealthy and cultivated society; this served as a pattern of civilization to the rude invaders, and assumed an ever-increasing importance as they became more civilized.

In the field of intellect and purely mental development, Rome, and through Rome, her predecessor Greece, left a still richer inheritance, but one which did not come much into play until a later period.

'Liberty of thought—reason taking herself for her own starting-point and her own guide—is an idea essentially sprung from antiquity, an idea which modern society owes to Greece and Rome. We evidently did not receive it either from Christianity or from Germany, for in neither of these elements of our civilization was it included. It was powerful on the contrary, it predominated, in the Græco-Roman civilization. That was its true origin. It is the most precious legacy which antiquity left to the modern world: a legacy which was never quite suspended and valueless; for we see the fundamental principle of all philosophy, the right of human reason to explore for itself, animating the writings and the life of Scotus Erigena, and the doctrine of freedom of thought still erect in the ninth century, in the face of the principle of authority.'*

* Vol. iv. p. 191.

Such, then, are the benefits which Europe has derived from the relics of the ancient Imperial civilization. But along with this perishing society, the barbarians found another and a rising society, in all the freshness and vigour of youth—the Christian Church. In the debt which modern society owes to this great institution, is first to be included, in M. Guizot's opinion, all which it owes to Christianity.

'At that time none of the means were in existence by which, in our own days, moral influences establish and maintain themselves independently of institutions; none of the instruments whereby a pure truth, a mere idea, acquires an empire over minds, governs actions, determines events. In the fourth century nothing existed which could give to ideas, to mere personal sentiments, such an authority. To make head against the disasters, to come victoriously out of the tempests, of such a period, there was needed a strongly organized and energetically governed society. It is not too much to affirm that at the period in question, the Christian Church saved Christianity. It was the Church, with its institutions, its magistrates, its authority, which maintained itself against the decay of the empire from within, and against barbarism from without; which won over the barbarians, and became the civilizing principle, the principle of fusion between the Roman and the barbaric world.'

That, without its compact organization, the Christian hierarchy could have so rapidly taken possession of the uncultivated minds of the barbarians; that, before the conquest was completed, the conquerors would have universally adopted the religion of the vanquished; if that religion had been recommended to them by nothing but its intrinsic superiority—we agree with M. Guizot in thinking incredible. We do not find that other savages, at other eras, have yielded

with similar readiness to the same influences; nor did the minds or lives of the invaders, for some centuries after their conversion, give evidence that the real merits of Christianity had made any deep impression upon them. The true explanation is to be found in the power of intellectual superiority. As the condition of secular society became more discouraging, the Church had more and more engrossed to itself whatever of real talents, as well as of sincere philanthropy, existed in the Roman world. 'Among the Christians of that epoch,' says M. Guizot, 'there were men who had thought of everything—to whom all moral and political questions were familiar; men who had on all subjects well-defined opinions, energetic feelings, and an ardent desire to propagate them and make them predominant. Never did any body of men make such efforts to act upon the world and assimilate it to themselves, as did the Christian Church from the fifth to the tenth century. She attacked Barbarism at almost all points, striving to civilize it by her ascendancy.'

In this the Church was aided by the important temporal position, which, in the general decay of other elements of society, it had assumed in the Roman empire. Alone strong in the midst of weakness, alone possessing natural sources of power within itself, it was the prop to which all things clung which felt themselves in need of support. The clergy, and especially the Prelacy, had become the most influential members of temporal society. All that remained of the former wealth of the Empire had for some time tended more and more in the direction of the Church. At the time of the invasions, we find the bishops very

generally invested, under the title of *defensor civitatis*, with a high public character—as the patrons, and towards all strangers the representatives, of the town communities. It was they who treated with the invaders in the name of the natives; it was their adhesion which guaranteed the general obedience; and after the conversion of the conquerors, it was to their sacred character that the conquered were indebted for whatever mitigation they experienced of the fury of conquest.

Thus salutary, and even indispensable, was the influence of the Christian clergy during the confused period of the invasions. M. Guizot has not overlooked, but impartially analysed, the mixed character of good and evil which belonged even in that age, and still more in the succeeding ages, to the power of the Church. One beneficial consequence which he ascribes to it is worthy of especial notice; the separation (unknown to antiquity) between temporal and spiritual authority. He, in common with the best thinkers of our time, attributes to this fact the happiest influence on European civilization. It was the parent, he says, of liberty of conscience. 'The separation of temporal and spiritual is founded on the idea, that material force has no right, no hold, over the mind, over conviction, over truth.' Enormous as have been the sins of the Catholic Church in the way of religious intolerance, her assertion of this principle has done more for human freedom, than all the fires she ever kindled have done to destroy it. Toleration cannot exist, or exists only as a consequence of contempt, where, Church and State being virtually the same body, disaffection to the national worship is

treason to the State; as is sufficiently evidenced by Grecian and Roman history, notwithstanding the fallacious appearance of liberality inherent in Polytheism, which did not prevent, as long as the national religion continued in vigour, almost every really free thinker of any ability in the freest city of Greece, from being either banished or put to death for blasphemy.* In more recent times, where the chief of the State has been also the supreme pontiff, not, as in England, only nominally, but substantially (as in the case of China, Russia, the Caliphs, and the Sultans of Constantinople,) the result has been a perfection of despotism, and a voluntary abasement under its yoke, which have no parallel elsewhere except among the most besotted barbarians.

It remains to assign, in the elemental chaos from which the modern nations arose, the Germanic or barbaric element. What has Europe derived from the barbarian invaders? M. Guizot answers—the spirit of liberty. That spirit, as it exists in the modern world, is something which had never before been found in company with civilization. The liberty of the ancient commonwealths did not mean individual freedom of action; it meant a certain form of political organization; and instead of asserting the private freedom of each citizen, it was compatible with a more complete subjection of every individual to the State, and a more active interference of the ruling powers with private conduct, than is the practice of what are now deemed the most despotic governments. The modern spirit of liberty, on the contrary, is the love of individual independence; the claim for free-

* Anaxagoras, Protagoras, Socrates, Aristotle, &c.

dom of action, with as little interference as is compatible with the necessities of society, from any authority other than the conscience of the individual. It is in fact the self-will of the savage, moderated and limited by the demands of civilized life; and M. Guizot is not mistaken in believing that it came to us, not from ancient civilization, but from the savage element infused into that enervated civilization by its barbarous conquerors. He adds, that together with this spirit of liberty, the invaders brought also the spirit of voluntary association; the institution of military patronage, the bond between followers and a leader of their own choice, which afterwards ripened into feudality. This voluntary dependence of man upon man, this relation of protection and service, this spontaneous loyalty to a superior not deriving his authority from law or from the constitution of society, but from the voluntary election of the dependent himself, was unknown to the civilized nations of antiquity; though frequent among savages, and so customary in the Germanic race, as to have been deemed, though erroneously, characteristic of it.

To reconcile, in any moderate degree, these jarring elements; to produce even an endurable state of society, not to say a prosperous and improving one, by the amalgamation of savages and slaves, was a work of many centuries. M. Guizot's Lectures are chiefly occupied in tracing the progress of this work, and showing by what agencies it was accomplished. The history of the European nations consists of three periods; the period of confusion, the feudal period, and the modern period. The Lectures of 1828 include, though on a very compressed scale, all the

three; but only in relation to the history of society, omitting that of thought, and of the human mind. In the following year, the Professor took a wider range. The three volumes which contain the Lectures of 1829, are a complete historical analysis of the period of confusion; expounding, with sufficient fulness of detail, both the state of political society in each successive stage of that prolonged anarchy, and the state of intellect, as evidenced by literature and speculation. In these volumes, M. Guizot is the philosopher of the period of which M. Augustin Thierry is the painter. In the Lectures of 1830—which, having been prematurely broken off by the political events of that year, occupy (with the *Pièces Justificatives*) only two volumes—he commenced a similar analysis of the feudal period; but did not quite complete the political and social part of the subject: the examination of the intellectual products of the period was not even commenced. In this state this great unfinished monument still remains. Imperfect, however, as it is, it contains much more than we can attempt to bring under even the most cursory review within our narrow limits. We can only pause and dwell upon the important epochs, and upon speculations which involve some great and fertile idea, or throw a strong light upon some interesting portion of the history. Among these last we must include the passage* in which M. Guizot describes the manner in which the civilization of the conquered impressed the imagination of the victors.

'We have just passed in review the closing age of the Roman civilization, and we found it in full *décadence*, without force, without fecundity, incapable almost of keeping itself

* Vol. ii. pp. 386–8.

alive. We now behold it vanquished and ruined by the barbarians; when on a sudden it reappears fruitful and powerful: it assumes over the institutions and manners which are brought newly into contact with it, a prodigious empire; it impresses on them more and more its own character; it governs and metamorphoses its conquerors.

'Among many causes, there were two which principally contributed to this result: the power of a systematic and comprehensive body of civil law; and the natural ascendancy of civilization over barbarism.

'In fixing themselves to a single abode, and becoming landed proprietors, the barbarians contracted, both with the Roman population and with each other, relations more various and durable than any they had previously known; their civil existence assumed greater breadth and stability. The Roman law was alone fit to regulate this new existence; it alone could deal adequately with such a multitude of relations. The barbarians, however they might strive to preserve their own customs, were caught, as it were, in the meshes of this scientific legislation, and were obliged to bring the new social order, in a great measure into subjection to it, not politically indeed, but civilly.

'Further, the spectacle itself of Roman civilization exercised a great empire over their minds. What strikes our modern fancy, what we greedily seek for in history, in poems, travels, romances, is the picture of a state of society unlike the regularity of our own; savage life, with its independence, its novelty, and its adventure. Quite different were the impressions of the barbarians. What to them was striking, what appeared to them great and wonderful, was civilization; the monuments of Roman industry, the cities, roads, aqueducts, amphitheatres; that society so orderly, so provident, so full of variety in its fixity—this was the object of their admiration and their astonishment. Though conquerors, they were sensible of inferiority to the conquered. The barbarian might despise the Roman as an individual being, but the Roman world in its *ensemble* appeared to him something above his

level; and all the great men of the age of the conquests, Alaric, Ataulph, Theodoric, and so many others, while destroying and trampling upon Roman society, used all their efforts to copy it.'

But their attempt was fruitless. It was not by merely seating themselves in the throne of the Emperors, that the chiefs of the barbarians could re-infuse life into a social order to which, when already perishing by its own infirmities, they had dealt the final blow. Nor was it in that old form that peaceful and regular government could be restored to Europe. The confusion was too chaotic to admit of so easy a disentanglement. Before fixed institutions could become possible, it was necessary to have a fixed population; and this primary condition was long unattained. Bands of barbarians, of various races, with no bond of national union, overran the Empire without mutual concert, and occupied the country as much as a people so migratory and vagabond could be said to occupy it; but even the loose ties which held together each tribe or band, became relaxed by the consequences of spreading themselves over an extensive territory; fresh hordes, too, were ever pressing on behind, and the very first requisite of order, permanent territorial limits, could not establish itself, either between properties or sovereignties, for nearly three centuries. The annals of the conquered countries during the intermediate period, but chronicle the desultory warfare of the invaders with one another; the effect of which, to the conquered, was a perpetual renewal of suffering and increase of impoverishment.

M. Guizot dates the termination of this downward

period from the reign of Charlemagne; others (for example, M. de Sismondi) have placed it later. We are inclined to agree with M. Guizot; no part of whose work seems to us more admirable than that in which he fixes the place in history of that remarkable man.*

The name of Charlemagne, says M. Guizot, has come down to us as one of the greatest in history. Though not the founder of his dynasty, he has given his name both to his race and to the age.

'The homage paid to him is often blind and undistinguishing; his genius and glory are extolled without discrimination or measure; yet at the same time, persons repeat, one after another, that he founded nothing, accomplished nothing; that his empire, his laws, all his works perished with him. And this historical commonplace introduces a crowd of moral commonplaces, on the ineffectualness and uselessness of great men, the vanity of their projects, the little trace which they leave in the world after having troubled it in all directions. . . . . Is this true? Is it the destiny of great men to be merely a burden and a useless wonder to mankind?

'At the first glance, the commonplace might be supposed to be a truth. The victories, conquests, institutions, reforms, projects, all the greatness and glory of Charlemagne, vanished with him; he seemed a meteor suddenly emerging from the darkness of barbarism, to be as suddenly lost and extinguished in the shadow of feudality. There are other such examples in history. . . . . .

'But we must beware of trusting these appearances. To understand the meaning of great events, and measure the agency and influence of great men, we need to look far deeper into the matter.

'The activity of a great man is of two kinds; he performs two parts; two epochs may generally be distinguished in his career. First, he understands better than other people the

* Vol. iii. Lecture 20.

wants of his time; its real, present exigencies; what, in the age he lives in, society needs, to enable it to subsist, and attain its natural development. He understands these wants better than any other person of the time, and knows better than any other how to wield the powers of society, and direct them skilfully towards the realization of this end. Hence proceed his power and glory; it is in virtue of this, that as soon as he appears, he is understood, accepted, followed—that all give their willing aid to the work, which he is performing for the benefit of all.

'But he does not stop here. When the real wants of his time are in some degree satisfied, the ideas and the will of the great man proceed further. He quits the region of present facts and exigencies; he gives himself up to views in some measure personal to himself; he indulges in combinations more or less vast and specious, but which are not, like his previous labours, founded on the actual state, the common instincts, the determinate wishes of society, but are remote and arbitrary. He aspires to extend his activity and influence indefinitely, and to possess the future as he has possessed the present.

'Here egoism and illusion commence. For some time, on the faith of what he has already done, the great man is followed in this new career; he is believed in, and obeyed; men lend themselves to his fancies; his flatterers and his dupes even admire and vaunt them as his sublimest conceptions. The public, however, in whom a mere delusion is never of any long continuance, soon discovers that it is impelled in a direction in which it has no desire to move. At first the great man had enlisted his high intelligence and powerful will in the service of the general feeling and wish: he now seeks to employ the public force in the service of his individual ideas and desires; he is attempting things which he alone wishes or understands. Hence disquietude first, and then uneasiness; for a time he is still followed, but sluggishly and reluctantly; next he is censured and complained of; finally, he is abandoned, and falls; and all which he alone

had planned and desired, all the merely personal and arbitrary part of his works, perishes with him.'

After briefly illustrating his remarks by the example of Napoleon—so often, by his flatterers, represented as another Charlemagne, a comparison which is the height of injustice to the earlier conqueror—M. Guizot observes, that the wars of Charlemagne were of a totally different character from those of the previous dynasty. 'They were not dissensions between tribe and tribe, or chief and chief, nor expeditions engaged in for the purpose of settlement or of pillage; they were systematic wars, inspired by a political purpose, and commanded by a public necessity.' Their purpose was no other than that of putting an end to the invasions. He repelled the Saracens: the Saxons and Sclavonians, against whom merely defensive arrangements were not sufficient, he attacked and subjugated in their native forests.

'At the death of Charlemagne, the conquests cease, the unity disappears, the empire is dismembered and falls to pieces; but is it true that nothing remained, that the warlike exploits of Charlemagne were absolutely sterile, that he achieved nothing, founded nothing?

'There is but one way to resolve this question: it is, to ask ourselves if, after Charlemagne, the countries which he had governed found themselves in the same situation as before; if the twofold invasions which, on the north and on the south, menaced their territory, their religion, and their race, recommenced after being thus suspended; if the Saxons, Sclavonians, Avars, Arabs, still kept the possessors of the Roman empire in perpetual disturbance and anxiety. Evidently it was not so. True, the empire of Charlemagne was broken up, but into separate states, which arose as so many barriers at all points where there was still danger. To the time of

Charlemagne, the frontiers of Germany, Spain, and Italy were in continual fluctuation; no constituted public force had attained a permanent shape; he was compelled to be constantly transporting himself from one end to the other of his dominions, in order to oppose to the invaders the moveable and temporary force of his armies. After him, the scene is changed; real political barriers, states more or less organized, but real and durable, arose; the kingdoms of Lorraine, of Germany, Italy, the two Burgundies, Navarre, date from that time; and in spite of the vicissitudes of their destiny, they subsist, and suffice to oppose effectual resistance to the invading movement. Accordingly that movement ceases, or continues only in the form of maritime expeditions, most desolating at the points which they reach, but which cannot be made with great masses of men, nor produce great results.

'Although, therefore, the vast dominion of Charlemagne perished with him, it is not true that he founded nothing; he founded all the states which sprung from the dismemberment of his empire. His conquests entered into new combinations, but his wars attained their end. The foundation of the work subsisted, though its form was changed.'

In the character of an administrator and a legislator, the career of Charlemagne is still more remarkable than as a conqueror. His long reign was one struggle against the universal insecurity and disorder. He was one of the sort of men described by M. Guizot, 'whom the spectacle of anarchy or of social immobility strikes and revolts; whom it shocks intellectually, as a fact which ought not to exist; and who are possessed with the desire to correct it, to introduce some rule, some principle of regularity and permanence, into the world which is before them.' Gifted with an unresting activity, unequalled perhaps by any other sovereign, Charlemagne passed his life

in attempting to convert a chaos into an orderly and regular government; to create a general system of administration, under an efficient central authority. In this attempt he was very imperfectly successful. The government of an extensive country from a central point was too complicated, too difficult; it required the co-operation of too many agents, and of intelligences too much developed, to be capable of being carried on by barbarians. 'The disorder around him was immense, invincible; he repressed it for a moment on a single point, but the evil reigned wherever his terrible will had not penetrated; and even where he had passed, it recommenced as soon as he had departed.'

Nevertheless, his efforts were not lost—not wholly unfruitful. His instrument of government was composed of two sets of functionaries, local and central. The local portion consisted of the resident governors, the dukes, counts, &c., together with the vassals or *beneficiarii*, afterwards called feudatories, to whom when lands had been granted, a more or less indefinite share had been delegated of the authority and jurisdiction of the sovereign. The central machinery consisted of *missi dominici*—temporary agents sent into the provinces, and from one province to another, as the sovereign's own representatives; to inspect, control, report, and even reform what was amiss, either in act or negligence, on the part of the local functionaries. Over all these the prince held, with a firm hand, the reins of government; aided by a national assembly or convocation of chiefs, when he chose to summon it, either because he desired their counsel or needed their moral support.

'Is it possible that of this government, so active and vigorous, nothing remained—that all disappeared with Charlemagne, that he founded nothing for the internal consolidation of society?

'What fell with Charlemagne, what rested upon him alone, and could not survive him, was the central government. After continuing some time under Louis le Debonnaire and Charles le Chauve, but with less and less energy and influence, the general assemblies, the *missi dominici*, the whole machinery of the central and sovereign administration, disappeared. Not so the local government, the dukes, counts, *vicaires, centeniers, beneficiarii*, vassals who held authority in their several neighbourhoods under the rule of Charlemagne. Before his time, the disorder had been as great in each locality as in the commonwealth generally; landed properties, magistracies, were incessantly changing hands; no local positions or influences possessed any steadiness or permanence. During the forty-six years of his government, these influences had time to become rooted in the same soil, in the same families; they had acquired stability, the first condition of the progress which was destined to render them independent and hereditary, and make them the elements of the feudal *régime*. Nothing, certainly, less resembles feudalism than the sovereign unity which Charlemagne aspired to establish; yet he is the true founder of feudal society: it was he who, by arresting the external invasions, and repressing to a certain extent the intestine disorders, gave to situations, to fortunes, to local influences, sufficient time to take real possession of the country. After him, his general government perished like his conquests, his unity of authority like his extended empire; but as the empire was broken into separate states, which acquired a vigorous and durable life, so the central sovereignty of Charlemagne resolved itself into a multitude of local sovereignties, to which a portion of the strength of his government had been imparted, and which had acquired under its shelter the conditions requisite for reality and durability. So that in this second point of view, in his civil as

well as military capacity, if we look beyond first appearances, he accomplished and founded much.'

Thus does a more accurate knowledge correct the two contrary errors, one or other of which is next to universal among superficial thinkers, respecting the influence of great men upon society. A great ruler cannot shape the world after his own pattern; he is condemned to work in the direction of existing and spontaneous tendencies, and has only the discretion of singling out the most beneficial of these. Yet the difference is great between a skilful pilot and none at all, though a pilot cannot steer in opposition to wind and tide. Improvements of the very first order, and for which society is completely prepared, which lie in the natural course and tendency of human events, and are the next stage through which mankind will pass, may be retarded indefinitely for want of a great man, to throw the weight of his individual will and faculties into the trembling scale. Without Charlemagne, who can say for how many centuries longer the period of confusion might have been protracted? Yet in this same example it equally appears what a great ruler can *not* do. Like Ataulph, Theodoric, Clovis, all the ablest chiefs of the invaders, Charlemagne dreamed of restoring the Roman Empire.

'This was, in him, the portion of egoism and illusion; and in this it was that he failed. The Roman *imperium*, and its unity, were invincibly repugnant to the new distribution of the population, the new relations, the new moral condition of mankind. Roman civilization could only enter as a transformed element into the new world which was preparing. This idea, this aspiration of Charlemagne, was not a public idea, nor a public want: all that he did for its accomplishment perished with him.

'Yet even of this vain endeavour, something remained. The name of the Western Empire, revived by him, and the rights which were thought to be attached to the title of Emperor, resumed their place among the elements of history, and were for several centuries longer an object of ambition, an influencing principle of events.' Even, therefore, in the purely egotistical and ephemeral portion of his operations, it cannot be said that the ideas of Charlemagne were absolutely sterile, nor totally devoid of duration.'

M. Guizot, we think, is scarcely just to Charlemagne in this implied censure upon his attempt to reconstruct civilized society on the only model familiar to him. The most intelligent cotemporaries shared his error, and saw in the dismemberment of his Empire, and the fall of his despotic authority, a return to chaos. Though it is easy for us to see, it was difficult for them to foresee, that European society, such as the invasions had made it, admitted of no return to order but through something resembling the feudal system. By the writers who have come down to us from the age in which that system arose, it was looked upon as nothing less than universal anarchy and dissolution. 'Consult the poets of the time, consult the chroniclers; they all thought that the world was coming to an end.' M. Guizot quotes one of the monuments of the time, a poem by Florus, a deacon of the church at Lyons, which displays with equal *naïveté* the chagrin of the instructed few at the breaking up of the great unsolid structure which Charlemagne had raised, and the satisfaction which the same fact caused to the people at large; not the only instance in history in which the instinct of the people has been nearer the truth than the considerate judgment of those who clung to historical precedent.

That renewal of the onward movement, which even a Charlemagne could not effect by means repugnant to the natural tendencies of the times, took place through the operation of ordinary causes, as soon as society had assumed the form which alone could give rise to fixed expectations and positions, and produce a sort of security.

'The moral and the social state of the people at this epoch equally resisted all association, all government of a single and extended character. Mankind had few ideas, and did not look far around. Social relations were rare and restricted. The horizon of thought and of life was exceedingly limited. Under such conditions, a great society is impossible. What are the natural and necessary bonds of political union? On the one hand, the number and extent of the social relations; on the other, of the ideas, whereby men communicate and are held together. Where neither of these are numerous or extensive, the bonds of a great society or state are non-existent. Such were the times of which we now speak. Small societies, local governments, cut, as it were, to the measure of existing ideas and relations, were alone possible; and these alone succeeded in establishing themselves. The elements of these little societies and little governments were ready-made. The possessors of benefices by grant from the king, or of domains occupied by conquest, the counts, dukes, governors of provinces, were disseminated throughout the country. These became the natural centres of associations co-extensive with them. Round these was agglomerated, voluntarily or by force, the neighbouring population, whether free or in bondage. Thus were formed the petty states called fiefs; and this was the real cause of the dissolution of the empire of Charlemagne.'*

We have now, therefore, arrived at the opening of the feudal period; and have to attempt to appreciate

* Vol. iii. *ad fin.*

what the feudal society was, and what was the influence of that society and of its institutions, on the fortunes of the human race; what new elements it introduced; what new tendencies it impressed upon human nature; or to which of the existing tendencies it imparted additional strength.

M. Guizot's estimate of feudalism is among the most interesting, and on the whole the most satisfactory, of his speculations. He observes,* that sufficient importance is seldom attached to the effects produced upon the mental nature of mankind by mere changes in their outward mode of living:—

'Every one is aware of the notice which has been taken of the influence of climate, and the importance attached to it by Montesquieu. If we confine ourselves to the direct influence of diversity of climate upon mankind, it is perhaps less than has been supposed; the appreciation of it is, at all events, difficult and vague. But the indirect effects, those for instance which result from the fact, that in a warm climate the people live in the open air, while in cold countries they shut themselves up in their houses—that they subsist upon different kinds of food, and the like—are highly important, and, merely by their influence on the details of material existence, act powerfully on civilization. Every great revolution produces in the state of society some changes of this sort, and these ought to be carefully observed.

'The introduction of the feudal *régime* occasioned one such change, of which the importance cannot be overlooked; it altered the distribution of the population over the face of the country. Till that time, the masters of the soil, the sovereign class, lived collected in masses more or less numerous—either sedentary in the towns, or wandering in bands over the country. In the feudal state these same persons lived insulated, each in his own habitation, at great distances from one

* Vol. i. Lecture 4.

another. It is obvious how great an influence this change must have exercised over the character and progress of civilization. Social preponderance and political power passed from the towns to the country; private property and private life assumed pre-eminence over public. This first effect of the triumph of the feudal principle, appears more fruitful in consequences, the longer we consider it.

'Let us examine feudal society as it is in its own nature, looking at it first of all in its simple and fundamental element. Let us figure to ourselves a single possessor of a fief in his own domain; and consider what will be the character of the little association which groups itself around him.

'He establishes himself in a retired and defensible place, which he takes care to render safe and strong; he there erects what he terms his castle. With whom does he establish himself there? With his wife and his children: probably also some few freemen who have not become landed proprietors, have attached themselves to his person, and remain domesticated with him. These are all the inmates of the castle itself. Around it, and under its protection, collects a small population of labourers—of serfs, who cultivate the domain of the seigneur. Amidst this inferior population religion comes, builds a church and establishes a priest. In the early times of feudality, this priest is at once the chaplain of the castle and the parish clergyman of the village; at a later period the two characters are separated. This, then, is the organic molecule, the unit, if we may so speak, of feudal society. This we have to summon before us, and demand an answer to the two questions which should be addressed to every fact in history—what was it calculated to do towards the development, first of man, and next of society?'

The first of its peculiarities, he continues, is the prodigious importance which the head of this little association must assume in his own eyes, and those of all around him. To the liberty of the man and the warrior, the sentiment of personality and individual

independence, which predominated in savage life, is now added the importance of the master, the landed proprietor, the head of a family. No feeling of self-importance comparable to this, is habitually generated in any other known form of civilization. A Roman patrician, for example, 'was the head of a family, was a master, a superior; he was, besides, a religious magistrate, a pontiff in the interior of his family.' But the importance of a religious magistrate is not personal; it is borrowed from the divinity whom he serves. In civil life the patrician 'was a member of the senate—of a corporation which lived united in one place. This again was an importance derived from without; borrowed and reflected from that of his corporation.'

'The grandeur of the ancient aristocracies was associated with religious and political functions; it belonged to the situation, to the corporation at large, more than to the individual. That of the possessor of a fief is, on the contrary, purely personal. He receives nothing from any one; his rights, his powers, come from himself alone. He is not a religious magistrate, nor a member of a senate; all his importance centres in his own person; whatever he is, he is by his own right and in his own name. Above him, no superior of whom he is the representative and the interpreter; around him, no equals; no rigorous universal law to curb him; no external force habitually controlling his will; he knows no restraint but the limits of his strength, or the presence of an immediate danger. With what intensity must not such a situation act upon the mind of the man who occupies it! What boundless pride, what haughtiness—to speak plainly, what insolence—must arise in his soul!'

We pass to the influence of this new state of society

upon the development of domestic feelings and family life.

'History exhibits to us the family in several different shapes. First, the patriarchal family, as seen in the Bible and in the various monuments of the East. The family is here numerous, and amounts to a tribe. The chief, or patriarch, lives in a state of community with his children, his kindred (of whom all the various generations are grouped around him), and his domestics. Not only does he live with them, but his interests and occupations are the same with theirs; he leads the same life. This is the situation of Abraham, of the patriarchs, of the chiefs of Arab tribes, who are in our own days a faithful image of patriarchal society.

'Another form of the family is the clan—that little association, the type of which must be sought in Scotland and Ireland, and through which, probably, a great part of the European world has at some time passed. This is no longer the patriarchal family. Between the chief and the rest of the people there is now a great difference of condition. He does not lead the same life with his followers: they mostly cultivate and serve; he takes his ease, and has no occupation save that of a warrior. But he and they have a common origin; they bear the same name; their relationship, their ancient traditions, and their community of affections and recollections establish among all the members of the clan a moral union, a kind of equality.

'Does the feudal family resemble either of these types? Evidently not. At first sight it has some apparent resemblance to the clan; but the difference is immense. The population which surrounds the possessor of the fief are perfect strangers to him; they do not bear his name; they have no relationship to him, are connected with him by no tie, historical or moral. Neither does he, as in the patriarchal family, lead the same life and carry on the same labour as those about him: he has no occupation but war; they are tillers of

the ground. The feudal family is not numerous; it does not constitute a tribe; it is confined to the family in the most restricted sense, the wife and children; it lives apart from the rest of the people, in the interior of the castle. Five or six persons, in a position at once alien from, and superior to, all others, constitute the feudal family. . . . . Internal life, domestic society, are certain here to acquire a great preponderance. I grant that the rudeness and violent passions of the chief, and his habit of passing his time in war and in the chase, must obstruct and retard the formation of domestic habits; but that obstacle will be overcome. The chief must return habitually to his own home; there he always finds his wife, his children, and them alone, or almost alone; they, and no others, compose his permanent society—they alone always partake his interest, his destiny. It is impossible that domestic life should not acquire a great ascendancy. The proofs are abundant. Was it not in the feudal family that the importance of women took its rise? In all the societies of antiquity, not only where no family spirit existed, but where that spirit was powerful, for instance in the patriarchal societies, women did not occupy anything like the place which they acquired in Europe under the feudal polity. The cause of this has been looked for in the peculiar manners of the ancient Germans; in a characteristic respect which it is affirmed that, in the midst of their forests, they paid to women. German patriotism has built upon one sentence of Tacitus a fancied superiority, a primitive and ineffaceable purity of German manners in the relations of the sexes to each other. Mere chimeras! Expressions similar to those of Tacitus, sentiments and usages analogous to those of the ancient Germans, are found in the recitals of many observers of barbarous tribes. There is nothing peculiar in the matter, nothing characteristic of any particular race. The importance of women in Europe arose from the progress and preponderance of domestic manners; and that preponderance became, at an early period, an essential character of feudal life.'

In corroboration of these remarks, he observes in another place, that in the feudal form of society (unlike all those which preceded it) the representative of the chief's person and the delegate of his authority, during his frequent absences, was the *châtelaine*. In his warlike expeditions and hunting excursions, his crusadings and his captivities, she directed his affairs, and governed his people with a power equal to his own. No importance comparable to this, no position equally calculated to call forth the human faculties, had fallen to the lot of women, before, nor, it may be added, since. And the fruits are seen in the many examples of heroic women which the feudal annals present to us; women who fully equalled, in every masculine virtue, the bravest of the men with whom they were associated; often greatly surpassed them in prudence, and fell short of them only in ferocity.

M. Guizot now turns from the seigneurial abode to the dependent population surrounding it. Here all things present a far worse aspect.

'In any social situation which lasts a certain length of time, there inevitably arises between those whom it brings into contact, under whatever conditions, a certain moral tie—certain feelings of protection, of benevolence, of affection. It was thus in the feudal society: one cannot doubt, that in process of time there were formed between the cultivators and their seigneur some moral relations, some habits of sympathy. But this happened in spite of their relative position, and nowise from its influence. Considered in itself, the situation was radically vicious. There was nothing morally in common between the feudal superior and the cultivators; they were part of his domain, they were his property. . . . . Between the seigneur and those who tilled the ground which belonged to him, there were (as far as this can ever be said

when human beings are brought together) no laws, no protection, no society. Hence, I conceive, that truly prodigious and invincible detestation which the rural population has entertained in all ages for the feudal *régime*. . . . . Theocratic and monarchical despotism have more than once obtained the acquiescence, and almost the affection, of the population subject to them. The reason is, theocracy and monarchy exercise their dominion in virtue of some belief common to the master with his subjects; he is the representative and minister of another power, superior to all human powers; he speaks and acts in the name of the Deity, or of some general idea, not in the name of the man himself, of a mere man. Feudal despotism is a different thing; it is the mere power of one individual over another, the domination and capricious will of a human being. . . . . Such was the real, the distinctive character of the feudal dominion, and such the origin of the antipathy it never ceased to inspire.'

Leaving the contemplation of the elementary molecule (as M. Guizot calls it) of feudal society—a single possessor of a fief with his family and dependents—and proceeding to consider the nature of the larger society, or state, which was formed by the aggregation of these small societies, we find the feudal *régime* to be absolutely incompatible with any real national existence. No doubt, the obligations of service on the one hand, and protection on the other, theoretically attached to the concession of a fief, kept alive some faint notions of a general government, some feelings of social duty. But, in the whole duration of the system, it was never found practicable to attach to these rights and obligations any efficient sanction. A central government, with power adequate to enforce even the recognised duties of the feudal relation, or to keep the peace between the

different members of the confederacy, did not and could not exist consistently with feudalism. The very essence of feudality was (to borrow M. Guizot's definition) the fusion of property and sovereignty. The lord of the soil was not only the master of all who dwelt upon it, but he was their only superior, their sovereign. Taxation, military protection, judicial administration, were his alone; for all offices of a ruler, the people looked to him, and could look to no other. The king was absolute, like all other feudal lords, within his own domain, and only there. He could neither compel obedience from his feudatories, nor impose his mediation as an arbitrator between them. Among such petty potentates, the only union compatible with the nature of the case was a federal union—the most difficult to maintain of all political organizations; one which, resting almost entirely on moral sanctions, and an enlightened sense of distant interests, requires, more than any other social system, an advanced state of civilization. The middle age was nowise ripe for it; the sword, therefore, remained the universal umpire; all questions were decided either by private war, or by that judicial combat which was the first attempt of society (as the modern duel is the last) to subject the prosecution of a quarrel by force of arms to the moderating influence of fixed customs and ordinances.

The following is M. Guizot's summary of the influences of feudalism on the progress of the European nations.

'Feudality must have exercised a considerable, and on the whole a salutary, influence on the internal development of the individual; it raised up in the human mind some moral

notions and moral wants, some energetic sentiments; it produced some noble developments of character and passion. Considered in a social point of view, it was not capable of establishing legal order or political securities; but it was indispensable as a recommencement of European society, which had been so broken up by barbarism as to be unable to assume any more enlarged or more regular form. But the feudal form, radically bad in itself, admitted neither of being expanded nor regularized. The only political right which feudalism has planted deeply in European society, is the right of resistance. I do not mean legal resistance; that was out of the question in a society so little advanced. The right of resistance which feudal society asserted and exercised, was the right of personal resistance—a fearful, an anti-social right, since it is an appeal to force, to war, the direct antithesis of society; but a right which never ought to perish from the breast of man, since its abrogation is simply equivalent to submission to slavery. The sentiment of this right had been lost in the degeneracy of Roman society, from the ruins of which it could not again arise; as little, in my opinion, was it a natural emanation from the principles of Christian society. Feudality re-introduced it into European life. It is the glory of civilization to render this right for ever useless and inactive; it is the glory of the feudal society to have constantly asserted and held fast to it.'

There is yet another aspect, and far from an unimportant one, in which feudal life has bequeathed, to the times which followed, a lesson worthy to be studied. Imperfect as the world still remains in justice and humanity, the feudal world was far inferior to it in those attributes, but greatly superior in individual strength of will, and decision of character.

'No reasonable person will deny the immensity of the social reform which has been accomplished in our times. Never have human relations been regulated with more justice,

nor produced a more general well-being as the result. Not only this, but, I am convinced, a corresponding moral reform has also been accomplished; at no epoch perhaps has there been, all things considered, so much honesty in human life, so many human beings living in an orderly manner; never has so small an amount of public force been necessary to repress individual wrong-doing. But in another respect we have, I think, much to gain. We have lived for half a century under the empire of general ideas, more and more accredited and powerful; under the pressure of formidable, almost irresistible events. There has resulted a certain weakness, a certain effeminacy, in our minds and characters. Individual convictions and will are wanting in energy and confidence in themselves. Men assent to a prevailing opinion, obey a general impulse, yield to an external necessity. Whether for resistance or for action, each has but a mean idea of his own strength, a feeble reliance on his own judgment. Individuality, the inward and personal energy of man, is weak and timid. Amidst the progress of public liberty, many seem to have lost the proud and invigorating sentiment of their own personal liberty.

'Such was not the Middle Age. The condition of society was deplorable, the morality of mankind much inferior to what is often asserted, much inferior to that of our own time. But in many persons, individuality was strong, will was energetic. There were then few ideas which ruled all minds, few outward forces which, in all situations and in all places, weighed upon men's characters. The individual unfolded himself in his own way, with an irregular freedom: the moral nature of man shone forth here and there in all its ambitious aspirations, with all its energy. A contemplation not only dramatic and attaching, but instructive and useful; which offers us nothing to regret, nothing to imitate, but much to learn; were it only by awakening our attention to what is wanting in ourselves—by showing to us of what a human being is capable when he will.'*

* Vol. v. pp. 29-31.

The third period of modern history, which is emphatically the modern period, is more complex and more difficult to interpret than the two preceding. Of this period, M. Guizot had only begun to treat; and we must not expect to find his explanations as satisfactory as in the earlier portions of his subject. The origin of feudalism, its character, its place in the history of civilization, he has discussed, as has been seen, in a manner which leaves little to be desired: but we cannot extend the same praise to his account of its decline, which (it is but fair to consider) is not completed; but which, so far as it has gone, appears to us to bear few marks of that piercing insight into the heart of a question, that determination not to be paid with a mere show of explanation, which are the characteristic excellences of the speculations thus far brought to notice.

M. Guizot ascribes the fall of feudality mainly to its imperfections. It did not, he says, contain in itself the elements of durability. It was a first step out of barbarism, but too near the verge of the former anarchy to admit of becoming a permanent social organization. The independence of the possessors of fiefs was evidently excessive, and too little removed from the savage state. 'Accordingly, independently of all foreign causes, feudal society, by its own nature and tendencies, was always in question, always on the brink of dissolution; incapable at least of subsisting regularly or of developing itself, without altering its nature.'*

He then sets forth how, in the absence of any common superior, of any central authority capable of

* Vol. v. pp. 364–6.

protecting the feudal chiefs against one another, they were content to seek protection where they could find it—namely, from the most powerful among themselves; how, from this natural tendency, those who were already strong, ever became stronger; the larger fiefs went on aggrandizing themselves at the expense of the weaker. 'A prodigious inequality soon arose among the possessors of fiefs,' and inequality of strength led, as it usually does, to inequality of claims, and at last, of recognised rights.

'Thus, from the mere fact that social ties were wanting to feudality, the feudal liberties themselves rapidly perished; the excesses of individual independence were perpetually compromising society itself; it found in the relations of the possessors of fiefs, neither the means of regular maintenance, nor of ulterior development; it sought in other institutions the conditions which were needful to it for becoming permanent, regular, and progressive. The tendency towards centralization, towards the formation of a power superior to the local powers, was rapid. Long before the royal government had begun to intervene at every point of the country, there had grown up, under the name of duchies, counties, viscounties, &c. many smaller royalties, invested with the central government of this or that province, and to whom the rights of the possessors of fiefs, that is, of the local sovereignties, became more and more subordinate.'*

This sketch of the progressive decomposition of the feudal organization, is, no doubt, historically correct; but we desiderate in it any approach to a scientific explanation of the phenomenon. That is an easy solution which accounts for the destruction of institutions from their own defects; but experience proves, that forms of government and social arrange-

* Vol. v. pp. 370–71.

ments do not fall, merely because they deserve to fall. The more backward and the more degraded any form of society is, the stronger is the tendency to remain stagnating in that state, simply because it is an existing state. We are unable to recognise in this theory of the decay of feudality, the philosopher who so clearly demonstrated its origin; who pointed out that the feudal polity established itself not because it was a good form of society, but because society was incapable of a better; because the rarity of communications, the limited range of men's ideas and of their social relations, and their want of skill to work political machinery of a delicate or complicated construction, disqualified them from being either chiefs or members of an organized association extending beyond their immediate neighbourhood. If feudality was a product of this condition of the human mind, and the only form of polity which it admitted of, no evils inherent in feudality could have hindered it from continuing so long as that cause subsisted. The anarchy which existed as between one feudal chief and another—the inequality of their talents, and the accidents of their perpetual warfare —would have led to continual changes in the state of territorial possession, and large governments would have been often formed by the agglomeration of smaller ones, occasionally perhaps a great empire like that of Charlemagne: but both the one and the other would have crumbled again to fragments as that did, if the general situation of society had continued to be what it was when the feudal system originated. Is not this the very history of society in a great part of the East, from the earliest record

of events? Between the time when masses could not help dissolving into particles, and the time when those particles spontaneously reassembled themselves into masses, a great change must have taken place in the molecular properties of the atoms. Inasmuch as the petty district sovereignties of the first age of feudality coalesced into larger provincial sovereignties, which, instead of obeying the original tendency to decomposition, tended in the very contrary direction, towards ultimate aggregation into one national government; it is clear that the state of society had become compatible with extensive governments. The unfavourable circumstances which M. Guizot commemorated in the former period, had in some manner ceased to exist; a great progress in civilization had been accomplished, under the dominion and auspices of the feudal system; and the fall of the system was not really owing to its vices, but to its good qualities —to the improvement which had been found possible under it, and by which mankind had become desirous of obtaining, and capable of realizing, a better form of society than it afforded.

What this change was, and how it came to pass, M. Guizot has left us to seek. Considerable light is, no doubt, incidentally thrown upon it by the course of his investigations, and the sequel of his work would probably have illustrated it still more. At present, the philosophic interpreter of historical phenomena is indebted to him, on this portion of the subject, for little besides materials.

It was under the combined assaults of two powers —royalty from above, the emancipated commons from

below—that the independence of the great vassals finally succumbed. M. Guizot has delineated with great force and perspicuity the rise of both these powers. His review of the origin and emancipation of the communes, and the growth of the *tiers-état*, is one of the best executed portions of the book; and should be read with M. Thierry's 'Letters on the History of France,' as the moral of the tale. In his sixth volume, M. Guizot traces, with considerable minuteness, the progress of the royal authority, from its slumbering infancy in the time of the earlier Capetians, through its successive stages of growth—now by the energy and craft of Philippe Auguste, now by the justice and enlightened policy of Saint Louis—to its attainment, not indeed of recognised despotism, but of almost unlimited power of actual tyranny, in the reign of Philippe le Bel. But on all these imputed causes of the fall of feudalism, the question recurs, what caused the causes themselves? Why was that possible to the successors of Capet, which had been impossible to those of Charlemagne? How, under the detested feudal tyranny, had a set of fugitive serfs, who congregated for mutual protection at a few scattered points, and called them towns, become industrious, rich, and powerful? There can be but one answer; the feudal system, with all its deficiencies, was sufficiently a government, contained within itself a sufficient mixture of authority and liberty, afforded sufficient protection to industry, and encouragement and scope to the development of the human faculties, to enable the natural causes of social improvement to resume their course. What these causes were, and why they have been so much more

active in Europe than in parts of the earth which were much earlier civilized, is far too difficult an inquiry to be entered upon in this place. We have already seen what M. Guizot has contributed to its elucidation in the way of general reflection. About the matter of fact, in respect to the feudal period, there can be no doubt. When the history of what are called the dark ages, because they had not yet a vernacular literature, and did not write a correct Latin style, shall be written as it deserves to be, that will be seen by all, which is already recognised by the great historical inquirers of the present time—that at no period of history was human intellect more active, or society more unmistakably in a state of rapid advance, than during a great part of the so much vilified feudal period.

M. Guizot's detailed analysis of the history of European life, is, as we before remarked, only completed for the period preceding the feudal. For the five centuries which extended from Clovis to the last of the Carlovingians, he has given a finished delineation, not only of outward life and political society, but of the progress and vicissitudes of what was then the chief refuge and hope of oppressed humanity, the religious society—the Church. He makes his readers acquainted with the legislation of the period, with the little it possessed of literature or philosophy, and with that which formed, as ought to be remembered, the real and serious occupation of its speculative faculties—its religious labours, whether in the elaboration or in the propagation of the Christian doctrine. His analysis and historical exposition of the Pelagian controversy—his examination of the religious litera-

ture of the period, its sermons and legends—are models of their kind; and he does not, like the old school of historians, treat these things as matters insulated and abstract, of no interest save what belongs to them intrinsically, but invariably looks at them as component parts of the general life of the age.

Of the feudal period, M. Guizot had not time to complete a similar delineation. His analysis even of the political society of the period is not concluded; and we are entirely without that review of its ecclesiastical history, and its intellectual and moral life, whereby the deficiency of explanation would probably have been in some degree supplied, which we have complained of in regard to the remarkable progress of human nature and its wants during those ages. For the strictly modern period of history he has done still less. The rapid sketch which occupies the concluding lectures of the first volume, does little towards resolving any of the problems in which there is real difficulty.

We shall therefore pass over the many topics on which he has touched cursorily, and without doing justice to his own powers of thought; and shall only further advert to one question, which is the subject of a detailed examination in the Essay in his earlier volume, 'the origin of representative institutions in England'—a question not only of special interest to an English reader, but of much moment in the estimation of M. Guizot's general theory of modern history. For if the natural course of European events was such as that theory represents it, the history of England is an anomalous deviation from that course; and the exception must either prove, or go far to

subvert, the rule. In England as in other European countries, the basis of the social arrangements was, for several centuries, the feudal system; in England as elsewhere, that system perished by the growth of the Crown, and of the emancipated commonalty. Whence came it, that amidst general circumstances so similar, the immediate and apparent consequences were so strikingly contrasted? How happened it, that in the Continental nations absolute monarchy was at least the proximate result, while in England representative institutions, and an aristocratic government with an admixture of democratic elements, were the consequence?

M. Guizot's explanation of the anomaly is just and conclusive. The feudal polity in England was from the first a less barbarous thing—had more in it of the elements from which a government might in time be constructed—than in the other countries of Europe. We have seen M. Guizot's lively picture of the isolated position and solitary existence of the seigneur, ruling from his inaccessible height, with sovereign power, over a scanty population; having no superior above him, no equals around him, no communion or co-operation with any, save his family and dependents; absolute master within a small circle, and with hardly a social tie, or any action or influence, beyond; everything, in short, in one narrow spot, and nothing in any other place. Now, of this picture, we look in vain for the original in our own history. English feudalism knew nothing of this independence and isolation of the individual feudatory in his fief. It could show no single vassal exempt from the habitual control of government, no one so strong that the

king's arm could not reach him. Early English history is made up of the acts of the barons, not the acts of this and that and the other baron. The cause of this is to be found in the circumstances of the Conquest. The Normans did not, like the Goths and Franks, overrun and subdue an almost unresisting population. They encamped in the midst of a people of spirit and energy, many times more numerous, and almost as warlike as themselves. That they prevailed over them at all was but the result of superior union. That union once broken, they would have been lost. They could not parcel out the country among them, spread themselves over it, and be each king in his own little domain, with nothing to fear save from the other petty kings who surrounded him. They were an army, and in an enemy's country; and an army supposes a commander, and military discipline. Organization of any kind implies power in the chief who presides over it and holds it together. Add to this, what various writers have remarked—that the dispossession of the Saxon proprietors being effected not at once, but gradually, and the spoils not being seized upon by unconnected bands, but systematically portioned out by the head of the conquering expedition among his followers—the territorial possessions of even the most powerful Norman chief were not concentrated in one place, but dispersed in various parts of the kingdom; and, whatever might be their total extent, he was never powerful enough in any given locality to make head against the king. From these causes, royalty was from the beginning much more powerful among the Anglo-Normans than it ever became in France while feudality remained in vigour.

But the same circumstances which rendered it impossible for the barons to hold their ground against regal encroachments except by combination, had kept up the power and the habit of combination among them. In French history we never, until a late period, hear of confederacies among the nobles; English history is full of them. Instead of numerous unconnected petty potentates, one of whom was called the King, there are two great figures in English history—a powerful King, and a powerful body of Nobles. To give the needful authority to any act of general government, the concurrence of both was essential: and hence Parliaments, elsewhere only occasional, were in England habitual. But the natural state of these rival powers was one of conflict; and the weaker side, which was usually that of the barons, soon found that it stood in need of assistance. Although the feudatory class, to use M. Guizot's expression, 'had converted itself into a real aristocratic corporation,'* the barons were not strong enough 'to impose at the same time on the king their liberty, and on the people their tyranny. As they had been obliged to combine for the sake of their own defence, so they found themselves under the necessity of calling in the people in aid of their coalition.'†

The people, in England, were the Saxons—a vanquished race, but whose spirit had never, like that of the other conquered populations, been completely broken. Being a German, not a Latin people, they retained the traditions, and some portion of the habits, of popular institutions and personal liberty. When called, therefore, to aid the barons in mode-

* 'Essais,' p. 419. † Ib. p. 424.

rating the power of the Crown, they claimed those ancient liberties as their part of the compact. French history abounds with charters of incorporation, which the kings granted, generally for a pecuniary consideration, to town communities which had cast off their *seigneurs*. The charters which English history is full of, are concessions of general liberties to the whole body of the nation; liberties which the nobility and the commons either wrung from the king by their united strength, or obtained from his voluntary policy as the purchase-money of their obedience. The series of these treaties, for such they in reality were, between the Crown and the nation, beginning with the first Henry, and ending with the last renewal by Edward I. of the Great Charter of King John, are the principal incidents of English history during the feudal period. And thus, as M. Guizot observes in his concluding summary—'In France, from the foundation of the monarchy to the fourteenth century, everything was individual—powers, liberties, oppression, and the resistance to oppression. Unity, the principle of all government—association of equals, the principle of all checks—were only found in the narrow sphere of each *seigneurie*, or each city. Royalty was nominal; the aristocracy did not form a body; there were burgesses in the towns, but no commons in the State. In England, on the contrary, from the Norman Conquest downwards, everything was collective; similar powers, analogous situations, were compelled to approach one another, to coalesce, to associate. From its origin, royalty was real, while feudality ultimately grouped itself into two masses, one of which became the high aristocracy, the other the body of the

commons. Who can mistake, in this first travail of the formation of the two societies, in these so different characteristics of their early age, the true origin of the prolonged difference in their institutions and in their destinies?'

M. Guizot returns to this subject in a remarkable passage in the first volume of his Lectures,* which presents the different character of the progress of civilization in England and in Continental Europe, in so new and peculiar a light, that we cannot better conclude this article than by quoting it.

'When I endeavoured to define the peculiar character of European civilization, compared with those of Asia and of antiquity, I showed that it was superior in variety, richness, and complication; that it never fell under the dominion of any exclusive principle; that the different elements of society co-existed and modified one another, and were always compelled to compromises and mutual toleration. This, which is the general character of European, has been above all that of English civilization. In England, civil and spiritual powers, aristocracy, democracy, and royalty, local and central institutions, moral and political development, have advanced together, if not always with equal rapidity, yet at no great distance after one another. Under the Tudors, for example, at the time of the most conspicuous advances of pure monarchy, the democratic principle, the power of the people, was also rising and gaining strength. The revolution of the seventeenth century breaks out; it is at once a religious and a political one. The feudal aristocracy appears in it, much weakened indeed, and with the signs of *décadence*, but still in a condition to take a part, to occupy a position, and have its share in the results. It is thus with English history throughout: no old element ever perishes entirely, nor is any new one wholly triumphant—no partial principle ever obtains

* Vol. i. Lect. 14.

exclusive ascendancy. There is always simultaneous development of the different social powers, and a compromise among their pretensions and interests.

'The march of Continental civilization has been less complex and less complete. The several elements of society, religious and civil, monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic, grew up and came to maturity not simultaneously, but successively. Each system, each principle, has in some degree had its turn. One age belongs, it would be too much to say exclusively, but with a very marked predominance, to feudal aristocracy, for example; another to the monarchical principle; another to the democratic. Compare the middle age in France and in England, the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth centuries of our history, with the corresponding centuries north of the Channel. In France, you find, at that epoch, feudality nearly absolute—the Crown and the democratic principle almost null. In England, the feudal aristocracy no doubt predominates, but the Crown and the democracy are not without strength and importance. Royalty triumphs in England under Elizabeth, as in France under Louis XIV., but how many *ménagements* it is compelled to observe! How many restrictions, aristocratic and democratic, it has to submit to! In England also, each system, each principle, has had its turn of predominance, but never so completely, never so exclusively, as on the Continent. The victorious principle has always been constrained to tolerate the presence of its rivals, and to concede to each a certain share of influence.'

The advantageous side of the effect of this more equable development is evident enough.

'There can be no doubt that this simultaneous unfolding of the different social elements, has greatly contributed to make England attain earlier than any of the Continental nations to the establishment of a government at once orderly and free. It is the very business of government to negotiate with all interests and all powers, to reconcile them with each other, and make them live and prosper together. Now this,

from a multitude of causes, was already in a peculiar degree the disposition, and even the actual state, of the different elements of English society: a general, and tolerably regular government had therefore less difficulty in constituting itself. So, again, the essence of liberty is the simultaneous manifestation and action of all interests, all rights, all social elements and forces. England, therefore, was already nearer to it than most other States. From the same causes, national good sense, and intelligence of public affairs, formed itself at an earlier period. Good sense in politics consists in taking account of all facts, appreciating them, and giving to each its place: this, in England, was a necessity of her social condition, a natural result of the course of her civilization.'

But to a nation, as to an individual, the consequences of doing everything by halves, of adopting compromise as the universal rule, of never following out a general idea or principle to its utmost results, are by no means exclusively favourable. Hear, again, M. Guizot.

'In the Continental States, each system or principle having had its turn of a more complete and exclusive predominance, they unfolded themselves on a larger scale, with more grandeur and *éclat*. Royalty and feudal aristocracy, for example, made their appearance on the Continental scene of action with more boldness, more expansion, more freedom. All political experiments, so to speak, have been fuller and more complete.' [This is still more strikingly true of the present age, and its great popular revolutions.] 'And hence it has happened that political ideas and doctrines (I mean those of an extended character, and not simple good sense applied to the conduct of affairs,) have assumed a loftier character, and unfolded themselves with greater intellectual vigour. Each system having presented itself to observation in some sort alone, and having remained long on the scene, it has been possible to survey it as a whole; to ascend to its first principles, descend to

its remotest consequences; in short, fully to complete its theory. Whoever observes attentively the genius of the English nation, will be struck with two facts—the sureness of its common sense and practical ability; its deficiency of general ideas and commanding intellect, as applied to theoretical questions. If we open an English book of history, jurisprudence, or any similar subject, we seldom find in it the real foundation, the ultimate reason of things. In all matters, and especially in politics, pure doctrine and philosophy—science properly so called—have prospered far more on the Continent than in England; they have at least soared higher, with greater vigour and boldness. Nor does it admit of doubt, that the different character of the development of the two civilizations has greatly contributed to this result.'

EARLY GRECIAN HISTORY AND LEGEND.

(A Review of the first Two Volumes of 'Grote's History of Greece.'*)

THE interest of Grecian history is unexhausted and inexhaustible. As a mere story, hardly any other portion of authentic history can compete with it. Its characters, its situations, the very march of its incidents, are Epic. It is a heroic poem, of which the personages are peoples. It is also, of all histories of which we know so much, the most abounding in consequences to us who now live. The true ancestors of the European nations (it has been well said) are not those from whose blood they are sprung, but those from whom they derive the richest portion of their inheritance. The battle of Marathon, even as an event in English history, is more important than the battle of Hastings. If the issue of that day had been different, the Britons and the Saxons might still have been wandering in the woods.

The Greeks are also the most remarkable people who have yet existed. Not, indeed, if by this be meant those who have approached nearest (if such an expression may be used where all are at so immeasurable a distance) to the perfection of social arrangements, or of human character. Their institutions, their way of life, even that which is their greatest distinction, the cast of their sentiments and development of their faculties, were radically inferior to the

* *Edinburgh Review*, October 1846.

best (we wish it could be said to the collective) products of modern civilization. It is not the results achieved, but the powers and efforts required to make the achievement, that measure their greatness as a people. They were the beginners of nearly everything, Christianity excepted, of which the modern world makes its boast. If in several things they were but few removes from barbarism, they alone among nations, so far as is known to us, emerged from barbarism by their own efforts, not following in the track of any more advanced people. If with them, as in all antiquity, slavery existed as an institution, they were not the less the originators of political freedom, and the grand exemplars and sources of it to modern Europe. If their discords, jealousies, and wars between city and city, caused the ruin of their national independence, yet the arts of war and government evolved in those intestine contests made them the first who united great empires under civilized rule—the first who broke down those barriers of petty nationality, which had been so fatal to themselves—and by making Greek ideas and language common to large regions of the earth, commenced that general fusion of races and nations, which, followed up by the Romans, prepared the way for the cosmopolitism of modern times.

They were the first people who had a historical literature; as perfect of its kind (though not the highest kind) as their oratory, their poetry, their sculpture, and their architecture. They were the founders of mathematics; of physics; of the inductive study of politics, so early exemplified in Aristotle; of the philosophy of human nature and life. In each

they made the indispensable first steps, which are the foundation of all the rest—steps such as could only have been made by minds intrinsically capable of everything which has since been accomplished. With a religious creed eminently unfavourable to speculation, because affording a ready supernatural solution of all natural phenomena, they yet originated freedom of thought. They, the first, questioned nature and the universe by their rational faculties, and brought forth answers not suggested by any established system of priestcraft; and their free and bold spirit of speculation it was, which, surviving in its results, broke the yoke of another enthralling system of popular religion, sixteen hundred years after they had ceased to exist as a people. These things were effected in two centuries of national existence: twenty and upwards have since elapsed, and it is sad to think how little comparatively has been accomplished.

To give a faithful and living portraiture of such a people; to show what they were and did, and as much as possible of the means by which they did it —by what causes so meteor-like a manifestation of human nature was produced or aided, and by what faults or necessities it was arrested; to deduce from the qualities which the Greeks displayed collectively or individually, and from the modes in which those qualities were unconsciously generated or intentionally cultivated, the appropriate lessons for the guidance of our own world—is an enterprise never yet attempted systematically, nor attempted successfully at all. Such is the declared object of the work of which the first two volumes lie before us. 'First, to embody in his own mind, and next to lay out before

his readers, the general picture of the Grecian world,' is Mr. Grote's description of his task. 'The historian,' he says, 'will especially study to exhibit the spontaneous movement of Grecian intellect, sometimes aided but never borrowed from without, and lighting up a small portion of a world otherwise clouded and stationary; and to set forth the action of that social system, which, while ensuring to the mass of freemen a degree of protection elsewhere unknown, acted as a stimulus to the creative impulses of genius, and left the inferior minds sufficiently unshackled to soar above religious and political routine, to overshoot their own age, and to become the teachers of posterity.'*

In this undertaking there is work for a succession of thinkers; nor will it be brought to completeness by any one historian or philosopher. But the qualifications of Mr. Grote, and the contents of these two volumes, give assurance that he will be remembered not only as the first who has seriously undertaken the work, but as one who will have made great steps towards accomplishing it. In ascribing to him the first attempt at a philosophical history of Greece, we mean no disparagement to the very valuable labours of his predecessor and friend, Bishop Thirlwall. That distinguished scholar has done much for the facts of Grecian history. Before him, no one had applied to those facts, considered as a whole, the most ordinary canons of historical credibility. The only modern historian of Greece who attempted or even affected criticism on evidence, Mr. Mitford, made almost no other use of it than to find reasons for

* Preface, pp. vii. viii.

rejecting all statements discreditable to any despot or usurper. Dr. Thirlwall has effectually destroyed Mitford as an historical authority; by substituting (though so unostentatiously as to give no sufficient idea of the service rendered) a candid and impartial narrative, for the most prejudiced misrepresentation by which party passion has been known to pervert the history of a distant time and a foreign people. But Dr. Thirlwall's, though highly and justly esteemed as a critical, does not attempt to be a philosophical history; nor was such an attempt to be expected from its original purpose. And though, in its progress, it has far outgrown in bulk, and still more in amplitude of scope and permanent value, its primitive design, the plan has not been fundamentally altered; and the most important part of Mr. Grote's undertaking has not been, in any respect, forestalled by it.

The portion which Mr. Grote has completed, and which is now published, appears at some disadvantage, from its not including even the beginning of the part of Grecian history which is of chief interest either to the common or to the philosophical reader. Mr. Grote, in his preface, laments that the religious and poetical attributes of the Greek mind appear thus far in disproportionate relief, as compared with its powers of acting, organizing, judging, and speculating. He might have added, that the religion and the poetry are only those of the most primitive period, the time before which nothing is known. A volume and a half are devoted to the legendary age; and the remaining half volume does not carry us much beyond the first dawn of real history.

The Legends of Greece Mr. Grote relates at greater length than has been thought necessary by any of his predecessors. This is incident to the design, which no one before him had seriously entertained, of making the history of Greece a picture of the Greek mind. There is no more important element in the mind of Greece than the legends. They constituted the belief of the Greeks of the historical period, concerning their own past. They formed also the Grecian religion; and the religion of an early people is the groundwork of its primitive system of thought on all subjects. Mr. Grote makes no distinction between the legends of the Gods and those of the Heroes. He relates the one and the other literally, as they were told by the poets, and believed by the general public, down to the time of the Roman empire. He makes no attempt to discriminate historical matter in the stories of heroes, no more than in those of the gods. Not doubting that some of them do contain such matter—that many of the tales of the heroic times are partially grounded on incidents which really happened—he thinks it useless to attempt to conjecture what these were. The siege of Troy is to him no more an historical fact than the births and amours of the gods, as recorded in Hesiod. The only thing which he deems historical in either is, that the Greeks believed them, and the poets sung them. Whether they were believed from the first, as they were afterwards, on the authority of poets, or the poets grounded their narratives on stories already current, we have no means of ascertaining; in some cases the one thing may have happened, in some the other; in Mr. Grote's view it is immaterial, since neither the

poems nor the so-called traditions bear, in his eyes, the smallest character of historical evidence.

This is essentially the doctrine of Niebuhr; and, in the hands of that eminent investigator of antiquity, it has, by English scholars, generally been accepted as subversive of the previously received view of Roman history. But no one, not even the translator of Niebuhr, Dr. Thirlwall, had applied this doctrine in the same unsparing manner to the Greek legends. Unqualified rejection has been confined to the stories of the gods. Between them and those of the heroes, a Greek would have been unable to see any difference. To his mind, both rested on the same identical testimony; both were alike part of his religious creed; supernatural agency, and supernatural motives and springs of action, are the pervading soul as much of the heroic as of the divine legends; the gods themselves appear in them quite as prominently, and even the heroes are real, though inferior, divinities. By moderns, however, the supernatural machinery (as it is called by critics profoundly ignorant of the spirit of antiquity) has been treated as a sort of scaffolding which could be taken down, instead of the main framework and support of the structure. The history of the Trojan war has been written on the authority of the Iliad, suppressing only the intervention of the gods, and whatever seemed romantic or improbable in the human motives and characters. As much credit is thus accorded to the poet, in all but the minute details of his narrative, as is given to the most veracious witness in a court of justice; since even with him we do no more than believe his statements where they are neither incredible in themselves,

nor contradicted by more powerful testimony. With this mode of dealing with legendary narratives, Mr. Grote is altogether at war. His discussion of the credibility of what are called traditions is eminently original, evolving into distinctness principles and canons of evidence and belief, which, by Niebuhr, are rather implicitly assumed than directly stated.

The following passages will give a clear idea of Mr. Grote's main position:—

'In applying the semi-historical theory to Grecian mythical narrative, it has been often forgotten that a certain strength of testimony, or positive ground of belief, must first be tendered before we can be called upon to discuss the antecedent probability or improbability of the incidents alleged. The belief of the Greeks themselves, without the smallest aid from special or cotemporary witnesses, has been tacitly assumed as sufficient to support the case, provided only sufficient deduction be made from the mythical narratives to remove all antecedent improbabilities. It has been assumed that the faith of the people must have rested originally upon some particular historical event, involving the identical persons, things, and places, which the original mythes exhibit, or at least the most prominent among them. But when we examine the psychagogic influences predominant in the society among whom this belief originally grew up, we shall see that their belief is of little or no evidentiary value, and that the growth and diffusion of it may be satisfactorily explained without supposing any special basis of matters of fact.

'The general disposition to adopt the semi-historical theory as to the genesis of Grecian mythes, arises in part from reluctance in critics to impute to the mythopœic ages extreme credulity or fraud, and from the presumption that where much is believed, some portion of it must be true. There would be some weight in these grounds of reasoning, if the ages under discussion had been supplied with records, and accustomed to critical inquiry. But amongst a people un-

provided with the former and strangers to the latter, credulity is necessarily at its maximum, as well in the narrator himself as in his hearers: the idea of deliberate fraud is moreover inapplicable, for if the hearers are disposed to accept what is related to them as a revelation from the muse, the *œstrus* of composition is quite sufficient to impart a similar persuasion to the poet whose mind is penetrated with it. The belief of that day can hardly be said to stand apart by itself as an act of reason: it becomes confounded with vivacious imagination and earnest emotion; and in every case where these mental excitabilities are powerfully acted upon, faith comes unconsciously and as a matter of course.

'It is, besides, a presumption far too largely and indiscriminately applied, even in our own advanced age, that where much is believed, something must necessarily be true—that accredited fiction is always traceable to some basis of historical truth. The influence of imagination and feeling is not confined simply to the process of retouching, transforming, or magnifying narratives originally founded on fact; it will often create new narratives of its own, without any such preliminary basis. Where there is any general body of sentiment pervading men living in society, whether it be religious or political—love, admiration, or antipathy—all incidents tending to illustrate that sentiment are eagerly believed, rapidly circulated, and (as a general rule) easily accredited. If real incidents are not at hand, impressive fictions will be provided to satisfy the demand: the perfect harmony of such fictions with the prevalent feeling stands in the place of certifying testimony, and causes men to hear them, not merely with credence, but even with delight: to call them in question and require proof, is a task which cannot be undertaken without incurring obloquy. Of such tendencies in the human mind, abundant evidence is furnished by the innumerable religious legends which have acquired currency in various parts of the world—legends which derived their origin, not from special facts misreported and exaggerated, but from pious feelings pervading the society, and translated into narrative by forward

and imaginative minds—legends in which not merely the incidents, but often even the personages are unreal, yet in which the generating sentiment is conspicuously discernible, providing its own matter as well as its own form. Other sentiments also, as well as the religious, provided they be fervent and widely diffused, will find expression in current narrative, and become portions of the general public belief: every celebrated and notorious character is the source of a thousand fictions exemplifying his peculiarities. And if it be true, as I think present observation may show us, that such creative agencies are even now visible and effective, when the materials of genuine history are copiously and critically studied—much more are we warranted in concluding, that in ages destitute of records, strangers to historical testimony, and full of belief in divine inspiration, both as to the future and as to the past, narratives purely fictitious will acquire ready and uninquiring credence, provided only they be plausible, and in harmony with the preconceptions of the auditors.'—(vol. i. pp. 572-9.)

The two points here insisted upon are, the large space which sheer and absolute fiction still occupies in human beliefs—a place naturally larger as we recede further into a remote and uncritical antiquity; and the tendency of any strong and widely diffused feeling to embody itself in fictitious narratives, which pass from mouth to mouth, and grow into traditions.

These points have been illustrated in a more quotable, because a more condensed form, in a fugitive publication, of which Mr. Grote here acknowledges the authorship. From this we borrow an illustration, too apt to be dispensed with,—a modern mythe, caught in the act of formation. Among the 'numerous fictions' which, in the words of Mr. Moore's Life of Byron, have been 'palmed upon the

world' as his 'romantic tours and wonderful adventures in places he never saw, and with persons that never existed,' one is thus recounted, in a review of the poem of 'Manfred,' by no less a person than Goethe.

'He (Byron) has often enough confessed what it is that torments him. There are, properly speaking, two females whose phantoms for ever haunt him, and in this piece also perform principal parts—one under the name of Astarte; the other without form or presence, and merely a voice. Of the horrid occurrence which took place with the former, the following is related:—When a bold and enterprising young man, he won the affections of a Florentine lady. Her husband discovered the amour, and murdered his wife; but the murderer was the same night found dead in the street, and there was no one to whom suspicion could be attached. Lord Byron removed from Florence, and these spirits haunted him all his life after. This romantic incident is rendered highly probable by innumerable allusions to it in his poems.'

On this Mr. Grote comments as follows:—

'The story which Goethe relates of the intrigue and double murder at Florence is not a misreported fact: it is a pure and absolute fiction. It is not a story of which one part is true and another part false, nor in which you can hope, by removing ever so much of superficial exaggeration, to reach at last a subsoil of reality. All is alike untrue, the basis as well as the details. In the mind of the original inventor, the legend derived its birth, not from any erroneous description which had reached his ears respecting adventures of the real Lord Byron, but from the profound and vehement impression which Lord Byron's poetry had made, both upon him and upon all others around him. The poet appeared to be breathing out his own soul and sufferings in the character of his heroes—we ought rather to say, of his hero, πολλῶν ὀνομάτων μορφὴ μία—he seemed like one struck down, as well as

inspired, by some strange visitation of destiny. In what manner, and from what cause, had the Eumenides been induced thus to single him out as their victim? A large circle of deeply-moved readers, and amongst them the greatest of all German authors, cannot rest until this problem be solved: either a fact must be discovered, or a fiction invented for the solution. The minds of all being perplexed by the same mystery, and athirst for the same explanation, nothing is wanted except a *prima vox*. Some one, more forward and more felicitous than the rest, imagines and proclaims the tragical narrative of the Florentine married couple. So happily does the story fit in, that the inventor seems only to have given clear utterance to that which others were dimly shadowing out in their minds: the lacerated feelings of the poet are no longer an enigma—the die which has stamped upon his verses their peculiar impress, has been discovered and exhibited to view. If, indeed, we ask what is the authority for the tale—to speak in the Homeric language, it has been suggested by some god, or by the airy-tongued Ossa, the bearer of encouragement and intelligence from omniloquent Zeus—to express the same idea in homely and infantine English, it has been whispered by a little bird. But we may be pretty well assured, that few of the audience will raise questions about authority—the story drops into its place like the keystone of an arch, and exactly fills the painful vacancy in their minds—it seems to carry with it the same sort of evidence as the key which imparts meaning to a manuscript in cipher, and they are too well pleased with the acquisition to be very nice as to the title. Nay, we may go further and say, that the man who demonstrates its falsehood will be the most unwelcome of all instructors; so that we trust, for the comfort of Goethe's last years, that he was spared the pain of seeing his interesting mythus about Lord Byron contemptuously blotted out by Mr. Moore.'

Suppose that there had never been any authentic biography of Byron, and that his own works and the

various testimonies about his personality having all perished, his name were carried down to a remote age exclusively by this writing of Goethe. The case would then be parallel with that of the heroic age of Greece; and the following passage describes what would probably have happened.

'In former days, the Florentine intrigue, and the other stories noticed by Mr. Moore, would have obtained undisputed currency as authentic materials for the life of Lord Byron; then would have succeeded rationalizing historians, who, treating the stories as true at the bottom, would have proceeded to discriminate the basis of truth from the accessories of fiction. One man would have disbelieved the supposed murder of the wife, another that of the husband; a third would have said that, the intrigue having been discovered, the husband and wife had both retired into convents, the one under feelings of deep distress, the other in bitter repentance, and that the fleshly lusts being thus killed, it was hence erroneously stated that the husband and wife had themselves been killed. If the reader be not familiar with the Greek scholiasts, we are compelled to assure him that the last explanation would have found much favour in their eyes, inasmuch as it saves the necessity of giving the direct lie to any one, or of saying that any portion of the narrative is absolutely unfounded. The misfortune is, that though the story would thus be divested of all its salient features, and softened down into something very sober and colourless, perhaps even edifying, yet it would not be one whit nearer the actual matter of fact. Something very like what we have been describing, however, would infallibly have taken place, had we not been protected by a well-informed biographer, and by the copious memoranda of a positive age.'

The feelings to which the early Grecian legends addressed themselves, and to which they owed not their currency only, but most of them probably their

very existence, were sentiments most strong and pervading; the religious feelings of the people, and their ancestorial feelings. The two, indeed, may be reduced to one, for the ancestorial were also in the most literal sense religious feelings. The legendary ancestors of each family, tribe, or race, were the immediate descendants of deities—were immortal beings, with supernatural powers to destroy or save, and worshipped with the rites and honours paid to gods. The difference between them and the gods was chiefly this, that they had once been men, and had performed exploits on earth which were the pride and glory of other men still living, who honoured them as patrons and guardian divinities—a distinction in no way tending to abate the thirst for wonderful tales respecting the heroes.

If a story harmonized with the prevailing sentiment, to doubt its truth would never occur to any one, not even to the inventors themselves; since, in a rude age, the suggestions of vivid imagination and strong feeling are always deemed the promptings of a god. The inspiration of the muse was not then a figure of speech, but the sincere and artless belief of the people; the bard and the prophet were analogous characters; Demodocus, at the court of King Alcinous, could sing the Trojan war by revelation from Apollo or from a Muse;* and Hesiod, in the Theogony, could declare respecting himself that he knew, by the favour of the Muses, the past, the present, and the future. Herodotus expressly says that Hesiod and Homer 'were the authors of the Greek Theogony, gave titles to the gods, distinguished their attributes

* Odyssey, viii. 487–91.

and functions, and described their forms;' that until taught by them, the Greeks were ignorant 'whence each of the gods sprang, and whether all of them were always existing, and what were their shapes.'* Plato invariably assumes the same thing. The poems were a kind of sacred books, like the Ramayun and the Mahabharat.

It may perhaps be said, that the eager interest here supposed in the exploits of ancestors, implies the ancestors to be at least real persons, surviving in the memory of those to whom the tales were told; and that therefore most of the heroes of legend must have really existed, however much of the marvellous in their adventures may be due to the imagination of their descendants. This doctrine would not be without plausibility, were it not the known practice of the early Greeks to create not only imaginary adventures of ancestors, but imaginary ancestors. It was the universal theory of Greece that every name, common to an aggregation of persons, indicated a common progenitor. Whether it was the name of a race, as Dorians, Ionians, Achæans; of a people, as Thessalians, Dolopians, Arcadians, Ætolians; of any of the numerous political divisions of a people, or of those other divisions not made by laws, but held together by religious rites and a traditional tie, the γένη or *gentes* (representing probably the units by the aggregation

* We have used Dr. Thirlwall's translation. The original words are—*Ενθεν δε ἔγένετο ἕκαστος τῶν θεῶν, εἴτε δ' ἀει ἦσαν πάντες, ὁκοῖοι τὲ τινες τὰ εἴδεα, οὐκ ἠπιστέατο* [οἱ Ἕλληνες] *μέχρι οὗ πρώην τε καὶ χθὲς, ὡς εἰπεῖν λόγῳ· Ἡσίοδον γὰρ καὶ Ὁμηρον ἡλικίην τετρακοσίοισι ἔτεσι δοκέω μου πρεσβυτέρους γενέσθαι, καὶ οὐ πλέοσι· οὗτοι δὲ εἰσι οἱ ποιήσαντες θεογονίην Ἕλλησι, καὶ τοῖσι θεοῖσι τὰς ἐπωνυμίας δόντες, καὶ τιμάς τε καὶ τέχνας διελόντες, καὶ εἴδεα αὐτῶν σημήναντες.*—*Herod.* ii. 53.

of which the community had, at some early period, been formed); all these, as well as many names of towns and localities, were believed to be etymologically derived from a primeval founder and patriarch of the whole tribe. Even names of which the origin was obvious, did not escape the application of the theory. The names of the four tribes in the primitive Athenian constitution, Geleontes, Hopletes, Argades, and Aigikoreis, appellations so evidently derived from their occupations, were ascribed, according to custom, to four Eponymi, sons of Ion, the general ancestor of the race, whose names were Geleon, Hoples, Argades, and Aigikores. No one now makes any scruple of rejecting the whole class of Eponymi, or name-heroes, from the catalogue of historical personages. Among the Greeks, however, they were the most precious of any; they were as firmly believed in, and their existence and adventures as justly entitled to the name of tradition, as any Grecian legend whatever.

But grant that the personages of the heroic legends were real, as doubtless some warriors and rulers must have left behind them an enduring memory, to which legends would not fail to attach themselves;—could we distinguish, among the names, those which belonged to actual persons, would it follow that the actions ascribed to them bore a resemblance to any real occurrences? We may judge from a parallel instance. In the earlier Middle Ages, the European mind had returned to something like the *naïf* unsuspecting faith of primitive times. It accordingly gave birth to a profusion of legends: those of saints, in the first place, almost a literature in themselves, of which, though very pertinent to our purpose, we say nothing

here. But the same age produced the counterpart of the tales of Hercules and Theseus, of the wanderings of Ulysses and the Argonautic expedition, in the shape of romances of chivalry. Like the Homeric poems, the romances announced themselves as true narratives, and were, down to the fourteenth century, popularly believed as such. The majority relate to personages probably altogether fictitious; Amadis and Lancelot we are nowise called upon to believe in; and of King Arthur, as of King Agamemnon, we have no means of ascertaining if he ever really existed or not. But the uncertainty does not extend to all these romantic heroes. That age, unlike the Homeric, notwithstanding its barbarism, preserved written records; and we know consequently from other evidence than the romances themselves, that some of the names they contain are real. Charlemagne is not only an historical character, but one whose life is tolerably well known to us; and so genuine a hero, both in war and peace—his real actions so surprising and admirable—that fiction itself might have been content with ornamenting his true biography, instead of fitting him with another entirely fabulous. The age, however, required, to satisfy its ideal, a Charlemagne of a different complexion from the real monarch. The chronicle of Archbishop Turpin, a compilation of poetic legends, supplied this want. Though containing hardly anything historical, except the name of Charlemagne and the fact of an expedition into Spain, it was declared genuine history by Pope Calixtus the Second; was received as such by Vincent de Beauvais, who, for his great erudition, was made preceptor to the sons of the wise King, Saint Louis of France;

and from this, not from Eginhard or the monk of St. Gall, the poets who followed drew the materials of their narrative. Even, then, if Priam and Hector were real persons, the siege of Troy by the Greeks may be as fabulous as that of Paris by the Saracens, or Charlemagne's conquest of Jerusalem. In the poem of Ariosto, the principal hero and heroine are Ruggiero and Bradamante, the ancestors, real or imaginary, of the Dukes of Ferrara, at whose court he lived and wrote. Does any one, for this reason, believe a syllable of the adventures which he ascribes either to these or to his other characters? Another personage of legend, who is also a personage of history, is Virgil. If the author of the Æneid were only known to us by the traditions of the Middle Ages, in what character would he have been transmitted to us? In that of a mighty enchanter. Such is the worth of what is called tradition, even when the persons are real, and the age not destitute of records. What must it be in times anterior to the use of writing?

It is now almost forgotten, that England, too, had a mythic history, once received as genuine; and neither has this wanted the consecration of the highest poetical genius, in the instances at least of Lear and Cymbeline.

'If we take the history of our own country, as it was conceived and written, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century, by Hardyng, Fabyan, Grafton, Hollinshed, and others, we shall find that it was supposed to begin with Brute the Trojan, and was carried down from thence, for many ages, and through a long succession of kings, to the times of Julius Cæsar. A similar belief of descent from Troy, arising seem-

ingly from a reverential imitation of the Romans, and of their Trojan origin, was cherished in the fancy of other European nations. With regard to the English, the chief circulator of it was Geoffrey of Monmouth, and it passed with little resistance or dispute into the national faith. The kings, from Brute downwards, were enrolled in regular chronological series, with their respective dates annexed. In a dispute which took place during the reign of Edward I. (A.D. 1301), between England and Scotland, the descent of the kings of England from Brute the Trojan was solemnly embodied in a document put forth to sustain the rights of the crown of England, as an argument bearing on the case then in discussion; and it passed without attack from the opposing party;* an incident which reminds us of the appeal made by Æschines, in the contention between the Athenians and Philip of Macedon respecting Amphipolis, to the primitive dotal rights of Akamas, son of Theseus; and also of the defence urged by the Athenians, to sustain their conquest of Sigeium against the reclamations of the Mitylenæans, wherein the former alleged that they had as much right to the place as any of the other Greeks who had formed part of the victorious armament of Agamemnon.

'The tenacity with which this early series of British kings was defended, is no less remarkable than the facility with which it was admitted. The chroniclers, at the beginning of the seventeenth century, warmly protested against the intrusive scepticism which would cashier so many venerable sovereigns, and deface so many noble deeds. They appealed to the patriotic feelings of their hearers, represented the enormity of their setting up a presumptuous criticism against the belief of ages, and insisted on the danger of the precedent, as regarded history generally. Yet, in spite of so large a body of authority and precedent, the historians of the nineteenth century begin the history of England with Julius Cæsar. They do not

* See Warton's 'History of English Poetry,' sec. iii. p. 131. 'No man, before the sixteenth century, presumed to doubt that the Francs derived their origin from Francus, the son of Hector; that the Spaniards were descended from Japhet, the Britons from Brutus, and the Scotch from Fergus.'—(*Ibid.* p. 140.)—(*Author's Note.*)

attempt either to settle the date of King Bladud's accession, or to determine what may be the basis of truth in the affecting narrative of Lear.'*—(vol. i. pp. 639–42.)

We will add, before taking our leave of this part of the subject, one argument more, which we conceive to be in itself almost decisive. Authentic history, as we ascend the stream of time, grows thinner and scantier, the incidents fewer, and the narratives less circumstantial;—shading off through every degree of twilight into the darkness of night. And such a gradual daybreak we find in Greek history, at and shortly before the first Olympiad (B. C. 776), the point from which the historical Greeks commenced their computation of time. We cannot be far wrong in fixing this as the epoch at which written characters began to be regularly employed by public authority, for the recordation of periodical religious solemnities—always the first events systematically recorded, on account of the fearful religious consequences attaching to any mistake in the proper period of their celebration.

But if, beyond the darkness which bounds this early morning of history, we come suddenly into the full glare of day—an island of light in the dark ocean of the unrecorded past, peopled with majestic forms, and glittering with splendid scenery—we may be well assured that the vision is as unreal as Plato's Atlantis, and that the traditions and the poems which

* Even in 1754, Dr. Zachary Grey, in his Notes on Shakspeare, commenting on the passage in King Lear, *Nero is an angler in the lake of darkness*, says,—'This is one of Shakespeare's most remarkable anachronisms. King Lear suceeeded his father Bladud, *anno mundi* 3105; and Nero, *anno mundi* 4017, was sixteen years old, when he married Octavia, Cæsar's daughter.'—See *Funcii Chronologia*, p. 94.—(*Author's Note.*)

vouch for its past existence, are the offspring of fancy, not of memory. True history is not thus interrupted in its course; it does not, like the Arcadian rivers, sink into the ground, and, after a long disappearance, rise again at a remote point. Light first, and darkness afterwards, may be the order of invention, but it is seldom that of remembrance.

The elaborate chapter in which Mr. Grote traces the progress of opinion among instructed Greeks, respecting their own legends, is important, not only in reference to the question of credibility, but as a part of the history of the human mind. Originating in a rude age, by which they were naïvely and literally believed, the legends descended into a period of comparative knowledge and culture. With the tone of that later age, or at least of the instructed portion of it, they were no longer in harmony. Several things conspired to produce this divergence. As communications grew more frequent, and travelled men became acquainted with legends for which they had acquired no early reverence, the mutually contradictory character of the stories themselves tended to undermine their authority. The characters and actions ascribed to the gods and heroes, contained much that was repugnant to the altered moral feelings of a more civilized epoch: already Xenophanes, one of the earliest Grecian philosophical inquirers, composed poems to denounce, in the most vehement terms, the stories related of the gods by Hesiod and Homer, 'the universal instructor,' as he terms him. But, more than all, the commencement of physical science and intelligent observation of nature, introduced a conception

of the universe, and a mode of interpreting its phenomena, in continual conflict with the simplicity of ancient faith: accustoming men to refer to physical causes and natural laws, what were conceived by their ancestors as voluntary interventions of supernatural beings, in wrath or favour to mortals.

This altered tone in the more cultivated part of the Grecian mind, did not, however, proceed to actual disbelief in the legendary religion of the people. Mankind do not pass abruptly from one connected system of thought to another: they first exhaust every contrivance for reconciling the two. To break entirely with the religion of their forefathers, would have been a disruption of old feelings, too painful and difficult for the average strength even of superior minds; and could not have been done openly, without incurring a certainty of the fate which, with all the precautions they adopted, overtook Anaxagoras and Socrates. But even of the philosophers, there were at first very few who carried the spirit of freethinking so far. In general, they were unable to emancipate themselves from the old religious traditions, but were just as little capable of believing them literally. 'The result was a new impulse, partaking of both the discordant forces—one of those thousand unconscious compromises between the rational convictions of the mature man, and the indelible illusions of early faith, religious as well as patriotic, which human affairs are so often destined to exhibit.' The legends, in their obvious sense, were no longer credible; but it was necessary to find for them a meaning in which they could be believed. And hence a series of efforts, continued with increasing energy from the first known

prose historian, Hecatæus, to the Neoplatonic adversaries of Christianity in the school of Alexandria, to which the nearest parallel is the attempts of Paulus and the German rationalists to explain away the Hebrew Scriptures. Rejected in their obvious interpretation, the narratives were admitted in some other sense, which stripped them of the direct intervention of any deity. They were represented either as ordinary histories, coloured by poetic ornament, or allegories, in which moral instruction, physical knowledge, or esoteric religious doctrines, were designedly wrapt up. The succession of these rationalizing explanations is recounted at length, with great learning and philosophy, by Mr. Grote.

His opinion of the historical system of explanation has been seen in the preceding extracts. Without being more favourable, on the whole, to the allegorical theory, he yet makes a concession to it, with which, if we rightly understand his meaning, we are compelled to disagree. He says,* 'Though allegorical interpretation occasionally lands us in great absurdities, there are certain cases in which it presents intrinsic evidence of being genuine and correct—*i.e.* included in the original purport of the story;' and he instances the tale of Ate and the Litæ, in the ninth book of the Iliad, which, he says, no one can doubt, carries with it an intentional moral. Now, it seems to us that this remark allows either too much to allegory, or not enough.

Every reader of the Iliad, even in translation, must be familiar with this fine passage; in which Ate (by Mr. Grote translated 'reckless impulse') is repre-

* Vol. i. p. 570.

sented as a gigantic figure, who stalks forth furiously, diffusing ruin; and Litæ, or Prayers, daughters of Zeus or Jupiter, as slowly limping after her to heal the wounds she has made. Now, if the poet did not believe the personal existence of Ate and the Litæ;—if he employed what he knew to be a mere figure of speech, as a means of giving greater impressiveness to a general remark respecting the course of human affairs,—the passage is then rightly termed allegorical. But if, as we conceive, such employment of the language of polytheism in a merely figurative sense, neither existed nor could exist until polytheism was virtually defunct; if the use of religious forms as a simple artifice of rhetoric, would have appeared to Homer (supposing the idea to have presented itself at all) an impious profanation; if the poet, in the full simplicity of his religious faith, accepted literally the personality and divinity of Ate and the Litæ, there is then no place for the word 'allegory,' in its correct acceptation. That a moral meaning accompanied in his mind the religious doctrine, and even suggested it, we at once admit: but he personified and deified the moral agencies concerned; and the story, as Müller says of the legend of Prometheus and Epimetheus (Forethought and Afterthought), is not an allegory, but a mythe. Otherwise, we must go much further, and affirm a substratum of allegory in the whole Greek religion; for the majority of its deities, including nearly all the more conspicuous of them, are undoubtedly personifications of either the physical or the moral powers of nature; and, this granted, the attributes ascribed to them would necessarily shadow forth those which observation pointed out in the

phenomena over which they were supposed to preside.

The natural history of Polytheism is now well understood. Religion, though *ex vi termini* preternatural, is yet a theory for the explanation of nature; and generally runs parallel with the progress of human conceptions of that which it is intended to explain; each step made in the study of the phenomena determining a modification in the theory. The savage, drawing his idea of power from his own voluntary impulses, ascribes will and personality to every individual object in which he beholds a power beyond his control; and at once commences propitiating it by prayer and sacrifice. This original Fetishism, towards natural objects which combine great power with a well-marked individuality, was prolonged far into the period of Polytheism proper. The Gaia of Hesiod, mother of all the gods, was not a goddess of the earth, but the earth itself; and her physical are blended with her divine attributes in a singular medley. The sun and moon, not deities residing therein, were the objects of the ancient Grecian worship: their identification with Apollo and Artemis belongs to a much later age. The Hindoos worship as a goddess the river Nerbudda—not a deity of the river, but the river itself;* and, if they ascribe to it sex, and other attributes inconsistent with the physical characteristics of the natural object, it is from inability to conceive the idea of personality, except in conjunction with the ordinary human impulses and attributes. The Homeric Sca-

* See, for interesting details, 'Rambles and Recollections of an Indian Official,' by Lieut.-Col. Sleeman. Vol. i. chap. iii.

mander is scarcely other than the animated river itself; and the god Alpheus, who pursues Arethusa through the ocean, is the actual river, flowing through the salt waves without mixing with them, and at length combining its waters in indissoluble union with those of the fountain it loves.

But where natural objects are not thus strikingly individualized—where the mind can at once recognise, in a multitude of things, one and the same power of affecting human interests—its tendency is not to deify the objects, but to place a deity over them, who, himself invisible, rules from a distance a whole class of phenomena. Bread and wine are great and beneficent powers, but the blindest fetish-worshipper never probably offered prayer or sacrifice to an individual loaf or wine-flask, but to an invisible Bacchus or Ceres, whose body, being unseen, is naturally assimilated to the human, and who is thenceforth handed over to the poets to exalt and dignify. Thus the first and most obvious step in the generalization of nature, by arranging objects in classes, is accompanied by a corresponding generalization of the gods. Fire, being a more mysterious as well as a more terrible agent, has, in some religions, been an object of direct worship; but in Homer we find the transition completely effected from the worship of fire to that of the fire-god, Hephæstos. Thunder, the most awful of all, was universally received as the attribute of the most powerful of deities, the ruler of gods and men. As thought advanced, not only all physical agencies capable of ready generalization, as Night, Morning, Sleep, Death, together with the more obvious of the

great emotional agencies, Beauty, Love, War, but by degrees also the ideal products of a higher abstraction, as Wisdom, Justice, and the like, were severally accounted the work and manifestation of as many special divinities. 'It became,' as Müller* expresses it, 'a general habit to concentrate every form of spiritual existence, whose unity was recognised, into an apex, which necessarily appeared to the mind as a personal entity. Can it be imagined that Δίκη, Θέμις, Μῆτις, Μοῦσα, Χάρις, Ἥβη, Ἐρινύς, Ἔρις, could have attained a generally believed reality, and even in some measure divine worship, otherwise than through a necessity, grounded on the epoch of mental development, to contemplate in this manner as a unity, not only every aspect of nature, but also of human life? How were it possible to pray to Charis, if she were only viewed as a predicate of human or higher natures? It is even wrong to consider the worship paid by the Romans to Virtus, Felicitas, &c. as allegorical in the strict sense; for then it could be no worship at all.'

Assuredly, these objects of worship were not conceived as ideas, but as persons, whose fundamental attributes, however, necessarily ran in close analogy to those of the ideas which they embodied. Such is the primitive type of polytheism—a thing of no human invention, but, in the strictest sense of the word, natural and of spontaneous growth. Afterwards, indeed, poets and priests did invent stories concerning the gods, more or less connected or consistent with their original attributes, which stories became incor-

* 'Introduction to a Scientific System of Mythology' (p. 61), recently and very well translated by Mr. Leitch.

porated with religion; and the most popular deities were those concerning whom the most impressive stories had been feigned. But the legends did not make the religion; the basis of that was a *bona fide* personification and divinization of the occult causes of phenomena. In these views we have no reason to think that we at all differ from Mr. Grote; but if there is any point in which his expositions do not quite satisfy us, it is, that they do not bring out strongly enough this part of the case; that the Greek religion appears in them too much as a sort of accident, the arbitrary creation of poets and storytellers; its origin in the natural human faculties and the spontaneous tendencies of the uncultivated intellect, being indicated indeed, but not placed in a sufficiently strong light.

With this exception, we can hardly bestow too much praise on this portion of Mr. Grote's performance. He has overcome the difficulty, so great to a modern imagination, of entering intelligently into the polytheistic frame of mind and conception of nature. In no treatise which we could mention, certainly in no work connected with Grecian history, do we find so thorough a comprehension of that state of the human intellect in which the directly religious interpretation of nature is paramount—in which every explanation of phenomena, that refers them to the personal agency of a hidden supernatural power, appears natural and probable, and every other mode of accounting for them incredible—where miracles are alone plausible, and explanation by natural causes is not only offensive to the reverential feelings of the hearer, but actually repugnant to his reason, so con-

trary is it to the habitual mode of interpreting phenomena. A state of mind made perfectly intelligible by our knowledge of the Hindoos; and nowhere better exhibited than in the pictures given by near observers of that curious people, who reproduce in so many respects the mental characteristics of the infancy of the human race.*

Though many topics discussed in Mr. Grote's volumes are more important, there is none more interesting, than the authorship of the Homeric poems; regarded by all antiquity as the production of one great poet (or at most two, for the Iliad and Odyssey), but which the scepticism of a recent period has pronounced to be compilations made as late as the time of Pisistratus, from a multitudinous assemblage of popular ballads. Now, however, that the Wolfian hypothesis seems nearly abandoned in the country in which it arose, the notion that such productions could have been manufactured by piecing and dovetailing a number of short poems originally distinct, may be ranked along with many other conceits of learned ingenuity, in the class of psychological curiosities. We are aware of no argument on the Wolfian side of the controversy which really deserves any weight, except the difficulty of conceiving that such long poems could have been composed and handed down to posterity by memory alone; for that they were produced prior to the use of writing, is certain, from many considerations,† and especially from the

* It is much to be regretted that so few such pictures are extant. We recommend, as one of the most instructive, the work already referred to, of Colonel Sleeman—a book which may be called, without exaggeration, 'The Hindoos painted by themselves.'

† These are fully set forth by Mr. Grote, pp. 191 to 197 of his second

absence of the smallest allusion to such an art in the whole eight-and-forty books; though so full of notices and descriptions of almost every useful or ornamental process which can be supposed to have been in existence in that early age, that they have been said to be a summary of all the knowledge of the time. The preservation of such works without help from writing, is no doubt, at the first aspect of the matter, surprising; but only because in this, as in so many other things, we antedate our modern experience, and apply to early ages the limited standard of our own. It is well said by Plato in the 'Phædrus,' that the invention of letters was the great enfeebler of memory. In our time, when the habit is formed of recording all things in permanent characters, and when every one relies, not on memory, but on the substitutes for it, we can scarcely form an idea of what its intrinsic powers must have been, when exercised and cultivated as a thing to be solely depended upon. Between the remembering faculties of the Homerids of Chios, and those of our degenerate days, there was doubtless as great a difference, as between the powers of eye and ear of a North American Indian and those of a London citizen. Nor was it, after all, more difficult to retain a single poem of twenty-four books, than twenty-four poems of one book each, which is much less than must have formed the stock in trade of any celebrated ἀοιδὸς. As for the poet himself, he doubtless, as he proceeded in the composition, wrote his poem, as it were, on the memory of the younger bards, by whom

volume, and by Müller, 'History of the Literature of Ancient Greece,' pp. 37 to 39.

it is consonant to the manners of that age that he should have been surrounded.

Those who assert the essential unity of the Homeric poems, by no means deny that there may have been, and probably were, interpolations, and even additions of some length, made either by the same or by other poets, to the original plan. This is the ground taken by Mr. Grote. He rejects the Pisistratean hypothesis. He maintains, from internal evidence, the complete unity of plan and authorship in the Odyssey. He claims a like unity for the greater part of the Iliad; but argues for an amount of subsequent addition to the poem, greater than we can bring ourselves to consider probable. We shall give, in his own words, what is peculiar to his theory.

'The first book, together with the eighth, and the books from the eleventh to the twenty-second inclusive, seem to form the primary organization of the poem, then properly an Achilleis: the twenty-third and twenty-fourth books are additions at the tail of this primitive poem, which still leave it nothing more than an enlarged Achilleis: but the books from the second to the seventh inclusive, together with the tenth, are of a wider and more comprehensive character, and convert the poem from an Achilleis into an Iliad. The primitive frontispiece, inscribed with the anger of Achilles and its direct consequences, yet remains, after it has ceased to be co-extensive with the poem. The parts added, however, are not necessarily inferior in merit to the original poem; so far is this from being the case, that amongst them are comprehended some of the noblest efforts of the Grecian epic. Nor are they more recent in date than the original; strictly speaking, they must be a little more recent, but they belong to the same generation and state of society as the primitive Achilleis.

'Nothing can be more striking than the manner in which

Homer concentrates our attention, in the first book, upon Achilles as the hero, his quarrel with Agamemnon, and the calamities of the Greeks, which are held out as about to ensue from it, through the intercession of Thetis with Zeus. But the incidents dwelt upon from the beginning of the second book down to the combat between Hector and Ajax in the seventh, animated and interesting as they are, do nothing to realize this promise; they are a splendid picture of the Trojan War generally, and eminently suitable to that larger title under which the poem has been immortalized; but the consequences of the anger of Achilles do not appear until the eighth book. The tenth book, or Doloneia, is also a portion of the Iliad, but not of the Achilleis; while the ninth book appears to be a subsequent addition (I venture to say, an unworthy addition), nowise harmonizing with that main stream of the Achilleis, which flows from the eleventh book to the twenty-second. The eighth book ought to be read in immediate connexion with the eleventh, in order to see the structure of what seems the primitive Achilleis; for there are several passages in the eleventh and the following books, which prove that the poet who composed them could not have had present to his mind the main event of the ninth book—the outpouring of profound humiliation by the Greeks, and from Agamemnon especially, before Achilles, coupled with formal offers to restore Briseïs, and pay the amplest compensation for past wrong. The words of Achilles (not less than those of Patroclus and Nestor) in the eleventh and following books, plainly imply that the humiliation of the Greeks before him, for which he thirsts, is as yet future and contingent; that no plenary apology has yet been tendered, nor any offer made of restoring Briseïs, while both Nestor and Patroclus, with all their wish to induce him to take arms, nevertheless view him as one whose ground of quarrel stands still the same as it did at the beginning. Moreover, if we look at the first book—the opening of the Achilleis—we shall see that this prostration of Agamemnon and the chief Grecian heroes before Achilles, would really be the termination of the whole poem;

for Achilles asks nothing more from Thetis, nor Thetis anything more from Zeus, than that Agamemnon and the Greeks may be brought to know the wrong that they have done to their capital warrior, and humbled to the dust in expiation of it. We may add, that the abject terror in which Agâmemnon appears in the ninth book, when he sends the supplicatory message to Achilles, as it is not adequately accounted for by the degree of calamity which the Greeks have experienced in the preceding (eighth) book, so it is inconsistent with the gallantry and high spirit with which he strives at the beginning of the eleventh. The situation of the Greeks only becomes desperate when the three great chiefs, Agamemnon, Odysseus, and Diomedes; are disabled by wounds; this is the irreparable calamity which works upon Patroclus, and through him upon Achilles. The ninth book, as it now stands, seems to me an addition by a different hand to the original Achilleis, framed so as both to forestal and spoil the nineteenth book, which is the real reconciliation of the two inimical heroes. I will venture to add, that it carries the ferocious pride and egotism of Achilles beyond all admissible limits, and is shocking to that sentiment of Nemesis which was so deeply seated in the Grecian mind. We forgive any excess and fury against the Trojans and Hector after the death of Patroclus, but that he should remain unmoved by restitution, by abject supplications, and by the richest atoning presents tendered from the Greeks, indicates an implacability more than human, and certainly such as neither the poet of the first book, nor the poet of the last twelve books, seeks to portray.'—(vol. ii. 234–44.)

We are able to go so far with the distinction drawn by Mr. Grote, as to admit that he has discriminated well between those parts of the Iliad which cannot have been additions to the original plan, and those which possibly may. If the poem does consist of an original basis and a subsequent enlargement, the

books which he has pointed out, or some of them, must be the parts superadded. But that they, or even the ninth, to which he takes such vehement exception, really were such subsequent additions (powerful as are some of the considerations he has urged), he has not succeeded in convincing us.

It is true, the books from the second to the seventh inclusive, in no way forward the action of the poem, as dependent on the anger of Achilles: and it is remarkable that, during that interval, Zeus not only suspends the performance of his promise to Thetis in the first book, but seems absolutely to have forgotten it, and directs his conduct and counsels by totally different considerations. This last is a serious blemish in the construction of the story; but imperfection of workmanship does not prove plurality of workmen; and if the poet intended to make his poem an Ilias as well as an Achilleis, there would have been in any case a difficulty of this sort to surmount, which it is not necessary to suppose that he must have surmounted successfully. But, if not strictly belonging to the plan of the Achilleis, these books conduce in a remarkable degree to the effect of those parts of the poem which do belong to it. In no epic is the interest centred exclusively in one individual; even in the Achilleis, not Achilles only, but the Greeks generally, and even the Trojans, inspire a keen sympathy; and how much that sympathy is promoted by the preliminary books, needs hardly be pointed out. Not only does the success of the Greeks in the fourth and fifth books greatly deepen the sense of their subsequent disaster, by giving it the character of a turn of

fortune; while the exploits of the principal heroes, especially Diomedes and Ulysses, augment the impression of their difficulties when those heroes are disabled; but, above all, it is in those books that we become acquainted with, and interested in, most of the leading characters of the subsequent epos. Hector especially, on whom the poet evidently intended that a strong personal interest should rest—what ground should we have had for sympathising with him, were it not for the beautiful scenes with Paris and Helen in the fourth book, Andromache and Hecuba in the sixth, and Ajax in the seventh? Without the books which Mr. Grote strikes from the original plan, there would be, if we except the amiable characters of Patroclus and Sarpedon, scarcely anything in the poem which excites a really personal interest.

With regard to the ninth book, we allow there are difficulties. The principal is the speech of Achilles to Patroclus in the eleventh book,* which certainly seems to imply that no atonement had yet been offered, or supplication made. Mr. Grote quotes several other passages, which apparently carry a similar implication; but none which, we think, it would be difficult to get over, if this were disposed of. On the other hand, there are difficulties in his own theory. He gets rid of three subsequent allusions to the transactions of the ninth book, by pro-

* 'Δῖε Μενοιτιάδη, τῷ 'μῷ κεχαρισμενε θυμῷ
Νῦν δϊω περὶ γουναт' ἐμὰ στησέσθαι 'Αχαιοὺς
Λισσομένους· χρείω γὰρ ἱκανεται οὐκετ' ἀνεκτός.'
Iliad, xi. 607.

nouncing them to be interpolations; but he has overlooked one of greater importance in the sixteenth, where Achilles says to Patroclus, that the time has come at which he had said that his revenge would cease, since the enemy has now reached the ships.* He had said this nowhere, as the text now stands, except in his answer to the embassy. If it be suggested that this passage may also be an interpolation, we shall still urge that it is not consonant to the character of Achilles, to suppose that he would have so far renounced his anger as to send aid to the Greeks even in that extremity, if he had received no offer whatever of atonement or restitution;—if Agamemnon and the Greeks had not yet acknowledged their fault, and humbled themselves before him. With respect to the argument from the more than human ferocity manifested by Achilles, and its conflict with the Greek sentiment of Nemesis, we cannot see the matter in the same light. It is with great hesitation that we should question any opinion of Mr. Grote on a point of Greek erudition; but we know not what evidence he has that the peculiar Greek idea of Nemesis—manifested in the famous speech of Solon to Crœsus, and which afterwards acted so leading a part in the Athenian drama—had already begun to exist in the Homeric age. We rather believe it to have been one of the points of difference between the more solemn and gloomy theology of the historic age of Greece, and the lively

* ' Ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν προτετύχθαι ἐάσομεν· οὐδ' ἄρα περ ἦν
Ἀσπερχὲς κεχολῶσθαι ἐνὶ φρεσίν· ἦτοι ἔφην γε
Οὐ πρὶν μηνιθμὸν καταπαυσέμεν, ἀλλ' ὁπόταν δὴ
Νῆας ἐμὰς ἀφίκηται ἀϋτὴ τε, πτολεμός τε.'

Iliad, xvi. 60–64.

anthropomorphism of the Homeric Pantheon. We find no traces of it in Homer or Hesiod. We find, indeed, severe vengeance taken on mortals by the Homeric deities, not for pride or arrogance generally, but for some special affront to their own dignity; and particularly for any presumptuous attempt to dispute their pre-eminence. It is on such provocation that Thamyris is struck blind by the Muses, and the children of Niobe destroyed by the arrows of Apollo and Artemis. But no such offence is offered by Achilles in the ninth book; nor any disobedience to the divine powers. No god or goddess had commanded him to lay aside his wrath, as Pallas, in the first book, restrains him from drawing his sword, and Zeus, in the twenty-fourth, enjoins him, through Thetis, to restore the body of Hector. To these intimations he is at once obedient, and is represented throughout as an eminently pious hero. Nor are we at all inclined to admit that his implacability exceeds what the sentiment of that age would allow of, in a character of vehement passion. He is not intended for a faultless hero; nor does he show any ferocity in the ninth book, at all comparable to that which he displays in the sixteenth; where, in the very act of sending forth Patroclus to aid the Greeks, he utters a fervent wish that not one Greek or Trojan might be left alive, but they two might alone survive to conquer Troy. Nor can we forget that several of the nobler characteristics of Achilles are nowhere so effectually manifested as in the ninth book; the princely courtesy, rivalling the best conceptions of chivalrous romance, in his reception of the embassy; and that abhorrence of disguise, also more resembling the knightly than the

Hellenic model, but so necessary to the ideal of his character, which he emphatically announces in the lines so often quoted:

> 'Εχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος, ὁμως ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν,
> Ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθει ἐνὶ φρεσὶν, ἄλλο δε βάζει.'

With regard to the tenth book, we think there is weight in what the critics have urged, that the successful nocturnal enterprise of Diomed and Ulysses is skilfully interposed, not only to break the rapid succession of one battle upon another, but to reanimate the spirits and courage of the Greeks after the disasters of the eighth book. We cannot coincide in Mr. Grote's unwillingness to believe 'that the author of the fifth book (or Aristeia of Diomedes) would condescend to employ the hero whom he there so brightly glorifies—the victor even over Ares himself—in slaughtering newly-arrived Thracian sleepers, without any large purpose or necessity;' since to kill men who were defenceless, provided they were enemies, and not ἱκέται or suppliants, had little that was repugnant to Greek feeling, even in a more advanced age; while an ambush is invariably spoken of in the Iliad as the most dangerous service, and the most decisive test of courage to which a warrior could be exposed. An Homeric audience would see, in this unchivalrous massacre, only the real intrepidity of the two heroes, in venturing alone, and for so perilous a purpose, into the camp of their sleeping enemies; and, in the Homeric point of view, it was doubtless an exploit worthy of the most distinguished warriors.

That Mr. Grote should think it possible for the two concluding books to be additions, we confess surprises us. We cannot imagine how, with the ideas of the

Greeks, both in the Homeric age and subsequently, respecting the rites of sepulture, the action of a Greek epos could ever have been complete until the two heroes, whose successive deaths formed the catastrophe of the poem, had received the accustomed funeral honours. Nor would a Greek audience, we think, have tolerated that Hector, the beloved of Zeus, whose death he so unwillingly concedes to Destiny and the public opinion of Olympus, should have been abandoned by him when dead to the ignominious fate designed, and in part executed, by Achilles. We need not point out how much the character of Achilles himself would lose of its interest, without the exquisite manner in which its softer elements are called forth by the interview with Priam; and though it may be true that 'the Homeric man would enter fully into the thirst of revenge felt by Achilles,' excessive and brutal as that revenge was, it is assuming too much to suppose that the Homeric man would have sympathized with Achilles exclusively. Such, certainly, was not Homer's purpose, as there are evidences enough even in the Achilleis to prove.

The chapter on the 'State of Society and Manners as exhibited in Grecian legend,' is sound and judicious; but on this subject previous writers had not left so much to be performed. A point of originality in Mr. Grote's treatment of it is the comparison kept up between the characteristics of the heroic and those of the historical period. Thus, for example, the sense of obligation in the Homeric period is exclusively of a personal kind:—'Personal feelings, either towards the gods, the king, or some near and known indivi-

dual, fill the whole of a man's bosom; out of them arise all the motives to beneficence, and all the internal restraints upon violence, antipathy, and rapacity; and special communion, 'as well as special solemnities, are essential to their existence;' while, in the conceptions of the citizen of historical Athens, 'the great impersonal authority called The Laws, stood out separately both as guide and sanction, distinct from religious duty or private sympathies.' In the Council of Chiefs, and the Agora or Popular Assembly, which, though with no definite function or authority, habitually accompany the Homeric kings, Mr. Grote sees the pre-existing elements of the subsequent republican governments. The following is an important remark.

'There is yet another point of view in which it behoves us to take notice of the Council and the Agora as integral portions of the legendary government of the Grecian communities. We are thus enabled to trace the employment of public speaking as the standing engine of government and the proximate cause of obedience, to the social infancy of the nation. The power of speech in the direction of public affairs becomes more and more obvious, developed, and irresistible, as we advance towards the culminating period of Grecian history—the century preceding the battle of Chæroneia. That its development was greatest among the most enlightened sections of the Grecian name, and smallest among the more obtuse and stationary, is matter of notorious fact; and it is not less true, that the prevalence of this habit was one of the chief causes of the intellectual eminence of the nation generally. At a time when all the countries around were plunged comparatively in mental torpor, there was no motive sufficiently present and powerful to multiply so wonderfully the productive minds of Greece, except such as arose from the rewards of public speaking. The susceptibility of the multi-

tude to this sort of guidance, their habit of requiring and enjoying the stimulus which it supplied, and the open discussion, combining regular forms with free opposition, of practical matters, political as well as judicial, are the creative causes which formed such conspicuous adepts in the art of persuasion. Nor was it only professed orators who were thus produced. Didactic aptitude was formed in the background, and the speculative tendencies were supplied with interesting phenomena for observation and combination, at a time when the truths of physical science were almost inaccessible. If the primary effect was to quicken the powers of expression, the secondary, but not less certain result, was to develope the habits of scientific thought. Not only the oratory of Demosthenes and Pericles, and the colloquial magic of Socrates, but also the philosophical speculations of Plato, and the systematic politics, rhetoric, and logic of Aristotle, are traceable to the same general tendencies in the minds of the Grecian people; and we find the germ of these expansive forces in the senate and agora of their legendary government.'—(vol. ii. pp 105-6.)

Incidental remarks of this nature, on the influence of circumstances in forming the peculiar Grecian character and civilization, occur largely in the first two chapters on historical Greece, viz. on its geography, and on 'the Hellenic people generally in the early historical times.' Mr. Grote does not give these speculations for more than they are worth. He does not affect to exhaust the subject, nor pretends that the causes he assigns account for the whole of the effect; but points out the natural tendencies of each influential fact, as it successively passes under his review. The following (vol. ii. pp. 298-302) is a favourable specimen.

'The configuration of the Grecian territory, so like in many respects to that of Switzerland, produced two effects of

great moment upon the character and history of the people. In the first place, it materially strengthened their powers of defence; it shut up the country against those invasions from the interior which successively subjugated all their continental colonies; and it at the same time rendered each fraction more difficult to be attacked by the rest, so as to exercise a certain conservative influence in assuring the tenure of actual possessors. But, in the next place, while it tended to protect each section of Greeks from being conquered, it also kept them politically disunited, and perpetuated their separate autonomy. It fostered that powerful principle of repulsion, which disposed even the smallest township to constitute itself a political unit apart from the rest, and to resist all idea of coalescence with others, either amicable or compulsory. To a modern reader, accustomed to large political aggregations, and securities for good government through the representative system, it requires a certain mental effort to transport himself back to a time when even the smallest town clung so tenaciously to its right of self-legislation. Nevertheless, such was the general habit and feeling of the ancient world, throughout Italy, Sicily, Spain, and Gaul: among the Hellenes it stands out more conspicuously, for several reasons—first, because they seem to have pushed the multiplication of autonomous units to an extreme point, seeing that even islands not larger than Peparethos and Amorgos had two or three separate city communities; secondly, because they produced, for the first time in the history of mankind, acute systematic thinkers on matters of government, amongst all of whom the idea of the autonomous city was accepted as the indispensable basis of political speculation; thirdly, because this incurable subdivision proved finally the cause of their ruin, in spite of pronounced intellectual superiority over their conquerors; and, lastly, because incapacity of political coalescence did not preclude a powerful and extensive sympathy between the inhabitants of all the separate cities, with a constant tendency to fraternise for numerous purposes, social, religious, recreative, intellectual, and æsthetical. . . . . .

'Nor is it rash to suppose that the same [geographical] causes may have tended to promote that unborrowed intellectual development for which they stand so conspicuous. General propositions respecting the working of climate and physical agencies upon character are indeed treacherous; for our knowledge of the globe is now sufficient to teach us that heat and cold, mountain and plain, sea and land, moist and dry atmosphere, are all consistent with the greatest diversities of resident men. . . . . Nevertheless, we may venture to note certain improving influences, connected with their geographical position, at a time when they had no books to study, and no more advanced predecessors to imitate. We may remark, first, that their position made them at once mountaineers and mariners, thus supplying them with great variety of objects, sensations, and adventures; next, that each petty community, nestled apart amidst its own rocks, was sufficiently severed from the rest to possess an individual life and attributes of its own, yet not so far as to subtract it from the sympathies of the remainder; so that an observant Greek, commencing with a great diversity of half-countrymen, whose language he understood, and whose idiosyncracies he could appreciate, had access to a larger mass of social and political experience than any other man in so unadvanced an age could personally obtain. The Phœnician, superior to the Greek on ship-board, traversed wider distances and saw a greater number of strangers, but he had not the same means of intimate communion with a multiplicity of fellows in blood and language: his relations, confined to purchase and sale, did not comprise that mutuality of action and reaction which pervaded the crowd at a Grecian festival. The scene which here presented itself was a mixture of uniformity and variety highly stimulating to the observant faculties of a man of genius,—who at the same time, if he sought to communicate his own impressions, or to act upon this mingled and diverse audience, was forced to shake off what was peculiar to his own town or community, and to put forth matter in harmony with the feelings of all.'

In the six concluding chapters of the second volume, Mr. Grote comprises the sum of what is known respecting the early condition of those Grecian States which have properly no history prior to the Persian invasion; and brings down the history of the Peloponnesian Greeks to the age of Crœsus and Pisistratus. The fragmentary nature of the information, and the conscientious integrity of the author, who scruples to supply the deficiency of certified facts by theory and conjecture, render these chapters, with one exception, somewhat meagre. The exception is the chapter which treats of the Legislation of Lycurgus, the earliest Grecian event of first-rate historical importance.

Although of the personality of Lycurgus scarcely anything can be said to be known, Mr. Grote entertains no doubt that such a person existed, and that the peculiar Spartan institutions were the work of a single legislator. Indeed, extraordinary as it may seem that one man, or even a combination of men, should have had power not merely to introduce, for that is little, but to give enduring vitality to so singular a system of manners and institutions, the system itself is so intensely artificial, that any more commonplace origin would be still more improbable; it bespeaks in every part systematic design.

The received view, however, of the Lycurgean reforms, and even of the Spartan institutions, Mr. Grote shows to be, in one important point, erroneous; the supposed equal division of landed property. He rejects this, not on the score of improbability, for it is not in itself so hard to believe as what Lycurgus really effected; but because no mention of it is to be

found in any Greek author who lived while the Lycurgean institutions were still in force; and there is ample proof that neither Herodotus, Thucydides, Xenophon, Isocrates, Plato, nor Aristotle knew of any such equal division, either as connected with Lycurgus or with Sparta. It rests on the sole testimony of Plutarch; and Mr. Grote believes it to have been an historic fancy, generated long after by the regrets and aspirations of the patriotic party of which the reforming kings, Agis and Cleomenes, were at the head.

'Taking the condition of the city as it stood in the time of Agis III. (say about 250 B.C.), we know that its citizens had become few in number, the bulk of them miserably poor, and all the land in a small number of hands—the old discipline and the public mess (as far as the rich were concerned) degenerated into mere forms—a numerous body of strangers or non-citizens (the old xenêlasy, or prohibition of resident strangers, being long discontinued) domiciled in the town, and forming a powerful moneyed interest; and lastly, the dignity and ascendancy of the state amongst its neighbours altogether ruined. It was insupportable to a young enthusiast like king Agis, and to many ardent spirits among his contemporaries, to contrast this degradation with the previous glories of the country; and they saw no other way of reconstructing the old Sparta except by again admitting the disfranchised poor citizens, redividing the lands, cancelling all debts, and restoring the public mess and military training in all their strictness. Agis endeavoured to carry through these subversive measures, (such as no demagogue in the extreme democracy of Athens would ever have ventured to glance at,) with the consent of the senate and public assembly, and the acquiescence of the rich. His sincerity is attested by the fact, that his own property, and that of his female relatives, among the largest in the state, was cast as the first sacrifice into the common stock.

But he became the dupe of unprincipled coadjutors, and perished in the unavailing attempt to realize his scheme by persuasion. His successor Kleomenês afterwards accomplished by violence a change substantially similar, though the intervention of foreign arms speedily overthrew both himself and his institutions.

'Now it was under the state of public opinion which gave birth to these projects of Agis and Kleomenês at Sparta, that the historic fancy, unknown to Aristotle and his predecessors, first gained ground, of the absolute equality of property as a primitive institution of Lycurgus. How much such a belief would favour the schemes of innovation, is too obvious to require notice; and, without supposing any deliberate imposture, we cannot be astonished that the predispositions of enthusiastic patriots interpreted according to their own partialities an old unrecorded legislation from which they were separated by more than five centuries. The Lycurgean discipline tended forcibly to suggest to men's minds the *idea* of equality among the citizens,—that is, the negation of inequality not founded on some personal attribute—inasmuch as it assimilated the habits, enjoyments, and capacities of the rich to those of the poor; and the equality thus existing in idea and tendency, which seemed to proclaim the wish of the founder, was strained by the later reformers into a positive institution which he had at first realized, but from which his degenerate followers had receded. . . . . We shall readily believe that [this hypothesis] would find easy and sincere credence, when we recollect how many similar delusions have obtained vogue in modern times far more favourable to historical accuracy—how much false colouring has been attached by the political feeling of recent days to matters of ancient history, such as the Saxon Wittenagemote, the Great Charter, the rise and growth of the English House of Commons, or even the Poor-law of Elizabeth.'—(vol. ii. pp. 527-30.)

The peculiarity of Sparta was not equality of fortunes, but a consistent attempt to make rich and poor

live exactly alike; and live not for themselves, but as the creatures and instruments of the ideal being called the State. The expedient used by the legislator to effect this, was to destroy, not private property itself, but the possibility of any separate enjoyment of it. By a stated contribution in kind from every citizen, public tables were maintained, at which all Spartans, from childhood to death, took regularly the same frugal meal. The Spartan citizen . . .

'Lived habitually in public, always either himself under drill, gymnastic and military, or a critic and spectator of others—always under the fetters and observances of a rule partly military, partly monastic, estranged from the independence of a separate home, seeing his wife during the first years after marriage, only by stealth, and maintaining little peculiar relation with his children. The surveillance not only of his fellow citizens, but also of authorised censors or captains nominated by the state, was perpetually acting upon him; his day was passed in public exercises and meals, his night in the public barrack to which he belonged. . . . . .

'The parallel of the Lycurgean institutions is to be found in the Republic of Plato, who approves the Spartan principle of select guardians, carefully trained and administering the community at discretion; with this momentous difference indeed, that the Spartan character formed by Lycurgus is of a low type, rendered savage and fierce by exclusive and overdone bodily discipline, destitute even of the elements of letters, immersed in their own narrow specialties, and taught to despise all that lay beyond, possessing all the qualities requisite to procure dominion, but none of those calculated to render dominion popular or salutary to the subject; while the habits and attributes of the guardians, as shadowed forth by Plato, are enlarged as well as philanthropic, qualifying them not simply to govern, but to govern for purposes protective, conciliatory, and exalted. Both Plato and Aristotle conceived as the perfection of society something of the Spartan

type, a select body of equally privileged citizens, disengaged from industrious pursuits, and subjected to public and uniform training; both admit (with Lycurgus) that the citizen belongs neither to himself, nor to his family, but to his city; both at the same time note with regret, that the Spartan training was turned only to one portion of human virtue, that which is called forth in a state of war; the citizens were converted into a sort of garrison, always under drill, and always ready to be called forth either against Helots at home, or against enemies abroad. . . . . When we contemplate the general insecurity of Grecian life in the ninth or eighth century before the Christian era, and especially the precarious condition of a small band of Dorian conquerors in Sparta and its district, with subdued Helots on their own lands, and Achæans unsubdued all around them. . . . . the exclusive aim which Lycurgus proposed to himself is easily understood; but what is truly surprising is the violence of his means, and the success of the result. He realised his project of creating in the 8000 or 9000 Spartan citizens unrivalled habits of obedience, hardihood, self-denial, and military aptitude—complete subjection on the part of each individual to the local public opinion, and preference of death to the abandonment of Spartan maxims—intense ambition on the part of every one to distinguish himself within the prescribed sphere of duties, with little ambition for anything else. In what manner so rigorous a system of individual training can have been first brought to bear upon any community, mastering the course of the thoughts and actions from boyhood to old age—a work far more difficult than any political revolution—we are not permitted to discover; nor does even the influence of an earnest and energetic Herakleid man, seconded by the still more powerful working of the Delphian god behind, upon the strong pious susceptibilities of the Spartan mind, sufficiently explain a phenomenon so remarkable in the history of mankind, unless we suppose them aided by some combination of co-operating circumstances which history has not transmitted to us, and preceded by disorders so exaggerated as to render

the citizens glad to escape from them at any price.'—(vol. ii. pp. 504-519.)

There is indeed no such instance of the wonderful pliability, and amenability to artificial discipline, of the human mind, as is afforded by the complete success of the Lacedæmonian legislator, for many generations, in making the whole body of Spartan citizens *at Sparta* exactly what he had intended to make them. At Sparta, it must be said; for a Spartan out of Sparta, at least during his country's ascendancy, was not only the most domineering and arrogant, but in spite of, or rather by a natural reaction from his ascetic training, the most rapacious and corrupt of all Greeks: no one fell so easy a victim to the temptations of luxury and splendour. Yet such habitual abnegation of ordinary personal interests, and merging of self in an idea, were not compatible with pettiness of mind. Most of the anecdotes and recorded sayings of individual Lacedæmonians breathe a certain magnanimity of spirit; although the Lacedæmonian State, which was the object of this worship, and was accustomed not to give but to receive sacrifices, was memorable for the peculiar pettiness of its political conduct—a selfishness so excessive, as, by the blindness and even the un-Spartan cowardice which it engendered, perpetually to frustrate its own ends.

Such were the Spartans; those hereditary Tories and Conservatives of Greece; objects of exaggerated admiration to the moralists and philosophers of the far nobler as well as greater and wiser Athens; because the second-rate superior minds of a cultivated age and nation are usually in exaggerated opposition against its spirit; and lean towards the faults con-

trary to those against which they are daily contending. To men who felt called upon to stand up for Law against Will, and for traditional wisdom against the subtleties of sophists and the arts of rhetoricians, Sparta was the standing model of reverence for law, and attachment to ancient maxims. The revolutions which incessantly menaced every other Grecian state, and from which even Athens was not wholly secure, never threatened Sparta. The steadiness of the Spartan polity, and the constancy of Spartan maxims, were to the Greeks highly imposing phenomena. 'It was the only government in Greece which could trace an unbroken peaceable descent from a high antiquity, and from its real or supposed founder;' and this, we think with Mr. Grote, was one of the main causes 'of the astonishing ascendancy which the Spartans acquired over the Hellenic mind, and which they will not be found at all to deserve by any superior ability in the conduct of affairs. The steadiness of their political sympathies—exhibited at one time by putting down the tyrants or despots, at another by overthrowing the democracies—stood in the place of ability; and even the recognised failings of their government were often covered by the sentiment of respect for its early commencement and uninterrupted continuance.' —(vol. ii. p. 477.)

The reader who is conversant with the existing state of knowledge respecting the Grecian world, will gather from what has been laid before him, that as a contribution to that knowledge, the present work is of high performance and still higher promise. The author is not surpassed even by German scholarship,

in intimate and accurate acquaintance with the whole field of Greek literature and antiquity; while none of his predecessors have approached to him in the amount of philosophy and general mental accomplishment which he has brought to bear upon the subject.

It has been made an objection to the volumes now published, that they contain a greater amount of dissertation than of history. To such objectors it may be replied, that for the times here treated of, a continuous stream of narrative is not possible; that those who desire nothing from history but an amusing story, may find such abundantly provided elsewhere; that it is as much an historian's duty to judge as to narrate, to prove as to assert; and that the same critics would be the first to reproach a writer who should substitute for the commonly received view of the facts a view of his own, without showing by what evidence he was prepared to substantiate it. There is in this case, too, the further peculiarity, that what is brought forward as matter of evidence, is itself almost always part and parcel of the exposition of the Greek mind; and on this score alone, no one who wishes to understand what Greece was, would desire to see one page of Mr. Grote's argumentative chapters expunged.

In the present volumes the style is clear, unaffected, and often very apt and vigorous. If we have a complaint to make, it would be of the too frequent employment of words of Greek or Latin origin; some of them recognised English words, though not in common use, but others purely of his own invention, and unintelligible except to scholars. In some cases, doubtless, the words are needed, and carry their

explanation along with them: such a word as 'autonomous,' conveying a political idea not exactly expressed by any modern word or phrase, is its own sufficient justification; and the same may be said of 'gens,' a word borrowed from Roman history, to express a combination of religious and political ideas familiar to antiquity, and the same, substantially, which Niebuhr has proved that the term denoted at Rome. But many cases would be found in a careful revisal of these volumes, in which similar hard words are used to convey a meaning which might be perfectly expressed by phrases generally intelligible.

VINDICATION

OF THE

FRENCH REVOLUTION OF FEBRUARY 1848,

IN REPLY TO LORD BROUGHAM AND OTHERS.*

THAT the transactions and the men of the late French Revolution should find small favour in the eyes of the vulgar and selfish part of the upper and middle classes, can surprise no one: and that the newspaper press, which is the echo, or as far as it is able, the anticipation, of the opinions and prejudices of those classes, should endeavour to recommend itself by malicious disparagement of that great event, is but in the natural order of things. Justice to the men, and a due appreciation of the event, demand that these unmerited attacks should not remain unprotested against. But it is difficult to grapple with so slippery an antagonist as the writer in a newspaper, and impossible to follow the stream of calumny as it swells by a perpetual succession of infinitesimal infusions from incessant newspaper articles. Unless through some similar medium, in which the day's falsehood can be immediately met by the day's contradiction, such assailants are fought at too great a disadvantage. It is fortunate, therefore, when some

* Letter to the Marquess of Lansdowne, K.G., Lord President of the Council, on the late Revolution in France. By Lord Brougham, F.R.S., Member of the National Institute. London: Ridgway. 1848.—*Westminster Review*, April 1849.

one, embodying the whole mass of accusation in one general bill of indictment, puts the case upon the issue of a single battle instead of a multitude of skirmishes. It is an immense advantage to the defenders of truth and justice, when all that falsehood and injustice have got to say is brought together in a moderate compass, and in a form convenient for exposure.

Such an advantage Lord Brougham has afforded by his outpouring of desultory invective against the Revolution and its authors. Among the multitude of performances, similar in intention and often superior in skill, which have issued from the English press since February 1848, his pamphlet is the only one which affects to embrace the whole subject, and the only one which bears a known name. Should it seem to any one that more importance is attached to such a performance, than properly belongs to a thing so slight and trivial, let it be considered that the importance of a numerical amount does not so much depend upon the unit which heads it, as upon the number of the figures which follow.

Lord Brougham

'Thinks it a duty incumbent on him, as one who has at various times been a leader in political movements, and had some hand in bringing about the greatest constitutional change that ever was effected without actual violence, to enter calmly but fully upon the consideration of the most extraordinary Revolution which ever altered the face of affairs in a civilized country.'

It is very natural and commendable in any one (even though he may not have had the advantage which Lord Brougham so often reminds the reader that he once enjoyed, of being a fellow-minister with

the Marquis of Lansdowne) to endeavour to understand the remarkable event which is the theme of his vituperation. Remarkable, it may justly be called; though the commonplace hyperbole of 'the most extraordinary Revolution which ever altered the face of affairs in a civilized country' will scarcely pass muster, even as a rhetorical flourish. In one respect, indeed, the Revolution of February must be allowed to be extraordinary, if not unexampled. It stands almost alone among revolutions, in having placed power in the hands of men who neither expected nor sought it, nor used it for any personal purpose—not even for that of maintaining, otherwise than by opinion and discussion, the ascendancy of their own party; men whose every act proclaimed them to be that almost unheard-of phenomenon—unselfish politicians; who did not, like the common run of those who fancy themselves sincere, aim at doing a little for their opinions and much for themselves, but, with a disinterested zeal, strove to make their tenure of power produce as much good as their countrymen were capable of receiving, and more than their countrymen had yet learnt to desire. It was not, perhaps, to be expected that men of this stamp should command much of Lord Brougham's sympathy. Lord Brougham has fought, both frequently and effectively, on the people's side; but few will assert that he often was much in advance of them, or fought any up-hill battle in their behalf. Even in the days of his greatest glory, it was remarked that he seldom joined any cause until its first difficulties were over, and it had been brought near to the point of success, by labourers of deeper earnestness, and more willing to

content themselves without indiscriminate applause. If sympathy, therefore, depends on similarity of character, it was not likely that his lordship should feel any warm admiration for the members of the Provisional Government. But he is probably the only man in Europe, of his reputation and standing, who would have been capable of speaking of them in such a strain as the following:—

'The instantaneous disappearance of virtues, dominions, princedoms, powers—of all the men who by their station, or their capacity, or their habits of government, or even their habits of business, had a claim to rule the affairs of their country, was succeeded by the sudden lifting up to supreme power of men who, with the single exception of my illustrious friend M. Arago, were either wholly unknown before in any way, even to their very names and existence; or who were known as authors of no great fame; or who were known as of so indifferent reputation, that they had better have not been known at all; and M. Arago, the solitary exception to this actual or desirable obscurity, himself known in the world of science alone.'

Remembering that, of the body of men thus spoken of, M. de Lamartine is one, it is difficult not to be amazed at so unbounded a reliance on the ignorance of the public. The literary fame of M. de Lamartine in France and in Europe, can afford to be ignored by Lord Brougham. There was not a single obscure person among the Provisional Government. The seven originally named were all distinguished members of the Chamber of Deputies. Their venerable President, one of the most honoured characters in France, had even held office, if that be a recommendation; he was a member of the first cabinet appointed in 1830, and left the Government when

Louis Philippe parted company with popular principles. The 'illustrious friend' known only 'in the world of science,' had been an active and influential politician for twenty years. Three others were leading members of the Paris bar. The four whom, in obedience to the popular voice, these seven accepted as their colleagues, were the acknowledged leaders of the republican press; and who, that had paid the smallest attention to French affairs, was not familiar with the names and reputation of Marrast and of Louis Blanc?

The first sin of the Revolution in the eyes of the pamphleteer, is its singularity. 'The like of it never was before witnessed among men.' It has 'no parallel in the history of nations.' It is 'wholly at variance with every principle, as well as all experience.' If it could possibly last, he would 'feel bound to make the addition of a new head or chapter' to 'a very elaborate work, the Political Philosophy' of 'our Useful Knowledge Society.' If his account of it were true, one would be unable to understand how the Revolution could possibly have happened. It was 'the sudden work of a moment—a change prepared by no preceding plan—prompted by no felt inconvenience—announced by no complaint;' 'without ground, without pretext, without one circumstance to justify or even to account for it, except familiarity with change' and 'proneness to violence.' It was the 'work of some half-dozen artisans, met in a printing-office;' 'a handful of armed ruffians, headed by a shoemaker and a sub-editor.' Who is meant by the sub-editor, his lordship best knows; the shoemaker, it must be presumed, is M. Adolphe Chenu, whose word Lord Brougham takes for the share he

had in the transaction, though a bare reading of his deposition is enough to prove that he was already known to be, what he is now admitted to have been, a police spy. To this 'handful,' be it of 'artisans' or 'ruffians,' everybody submitted, though everybody disapproved. Half-a-dozen obscure men overthrew a government which nobody disliked, and established one which nobody desired. This singular incident, of a government which, so to speak, falls down of itself, does not suggest to the writer that there must have been something faulty in its foundations. It merely proves to him, that foundations are of no use. It reveals the 'terrible truth,' that it is natural to buildings to fall without a cause, and that henceforth none can be expected to stand. It 'for ever destroys our confidence in any system of political power which may be reared,' not only in France, but on the face of the earth. 'All sense of security in any existing government' is gone. 'None can now be held safe for an hour.'

The explanation of the Revolution is, in short, that it is entirely inexplicable; and this is intended, not as a confession of ignorance, but as a sufficient theory.

Common sense, however little informed concerning the Revolution, has been unable, from the first, to accept this notion of it. It appears to Lord Brougham very unaccountable that the English journals did not at once declare a determined enmity to the Revolution, but waited a few weeks before assuming their present attitude of hostility. It was because they did not believe, as he professes to do, that the best and wisest of governments had been overthrown by a touch—

the mature opinion of the whole country being in its favour. That, too, is the reason why even now, while the grossest misrepresentations of the state of things which the Revolution has produced are universally propagated and very generally believed, hardly any one except the pamphleteer expresses regret for what it swept away. 'The illustrious prince, who, with extraordinary ability and complete success, had, in times of foreign and domestic difficulty, steered the vessel of the State in safety and in peace during a period of seventeen years,' and who had invited Lord Brougham to the Tuileries, and listened with apparent resignation to his 'earnest and zealous' counsels—has now Lord Brougham for his only, or almost only, regretter and admirer. Why is this? Because everybody, whether acquainted with the facts or not, is able to see, that a government which, after seventeen years of almost absolute power over a great country, can be overthrown in a day—which, during that long period, a period too of peace and prosperity, undisturbed by any public calamity, has so entirely failed of creating anywhere a wish for its preservation, that 'a capital of one million souls, and a nation of five-and-thirty,' including an army of several hundred thousand, look on quietly while 'a shoemaker and a sub-editor,' followed by 'an armed mob of two or three thousand,' turn out the Chambers, and proclaim a totally different set of institutions—that such a government, unless it was so much in advance of the public intelligence as to be out of the reach of appreciation by it, was so greatly in arrear of it as to deserve to fall.

This government, Lord Brougham confesses, was

not without its foibles. The ministry had committed some blunders and indiscretions, and the institutions of the country had a few remaining defects, which the government showed no willingness to remove. There were too many placemen in parliament, and the elective franchise was 'too limited,' being confined, in a nation of thirty-four millions, to about a quarter of a million; distributed, it might have been added, so unequally, that a majority of the constituencies did not exceed 200 or 300 voters. The government should have looked to this. They should have given 'votes to all who were liable to serve on juries;' and also 'enfranchised, without regard to property, the classes connected with science, letters, and the arts;' which is the same thing twice over, for the jury-list consisted precisely of the electors and of those classes. By this they would have added to the 250,000 electors, and to the large constituencies almost exclusively, some twenty or thirty thousand voters more. The other improvements of which, in Lord Brougham's judgment, the French Constitution stood in need, were to make the peerage hereditary, and allow land to be entailed. It would have been treating his friends very hardly, to be severe upon them for not effecting these last specimens of constitutional improvement, since they might, with as much chance of success, have attempted to alter the solar system. Hereditary legislation and entails are not things which a nation takes back, when once it has rid itself of them. It certainly was not for this that the government of Louis Philippe, in the moment of trial, was found to be deserted by all mankind. Accordingly, Lord Brougham can find no mode of accounting for the fact

but the selfishness and indifference of the National Guard, who 'think only of their shops and their brittle wares; and avoid acting, provided they see no risk of pillage following the outbreak.'

This specimen of philosophizing is not at all Baconian, and does no credit to the political philosopher of the Useful Knowledge Society. The National Guard acted vigorously enough in 1832, and again in 1834, when they assisted the troops in putting down much more formidable insurrections than that of 1848. Their conduct in June last was not, as the pamphlet represents, the exception, but the rule. Their horror of *l'émeute* amounted to a passion: it was that, and not any attachment to the throne of Louis Philippe, which made them tolerate him for seventeen years. Why, then, in February, did they, for the first and only time, not only not resist, but openly countenance the insurrection? Because the time had come when disgust with the government had become a stronger feeling than even that passionate horror. The ruler of France had made the terror of the bourgeois at the idea of a new revolution, his sole instrument of government, except personal corruption; and that support now gave way under him.

The explanation of this result of seventeen years of power—the reason why a government which, in the first years following its establishment, the most determined and violent attacks had failed to shake, found itself, in 1848, so feeble, that it fell at the first onset, and not a hand was raised to stay its fall—will be found, we believe, principally in two things.

First—it was a government wholly without the spirit of improvement. Not only did it make an ob-

stinate resistance to all and every organic reform, even the most moderate; to all merely legislative or merely administrative improvements it was, in practice, equally inimical: it originated none itself, and successfully resisted all which were proposed by others. There are few instances of a government, in a country calling itself free, so completely sold to the support of all abuses: it rested on a coalition of all the sinister interests in France. Among those who influenced the suffrages of the bodies of 200 or 300 electors who returned the ministerial majority, there were always some to whose interests improvement, be it in what it might, would have been adverse. It made things worse, not better, that the most conspicuous instruments of the system were men of knowledge and cultivation, who had gained the greater part of their reputation as the advocates of improvement. In some of these men it might be personal interest, in others hatred of democracy; but neither scrupled, for the sake of keeping their party together, to make themselves subservient to the purposes of their worst supporters. In order to bind these together in an united band to oppose democracy, they were allowed to have their own way in resisting all other change. This was of itself fatal to the durability of a government, in the present condition of the world. No government can now expect to be permanent, unless it guarantees progress as well as order; nor can it continue really to secure order, unless it promotes progress. It can go on, as yet, with only a little of the spirit of improvement. While reformers have even a remote hope of effecting their objects through the existing system, they are generally willing to bear with it. But when

there is no hope at all; when the institutions themselves seem to oppose an unyielding barrier to the progress of improvement, the advancing tide heaps itself up behind them till it bears them down.

This was one great characteristic of the government of Louis Philippe. The other, equally discreditable, was the more fatal to that government, because identified, still more than the first, in public opinion, with the personal character and agency of the King himself. It wrought almost exclusively through the meaner and more selfish impulses of mankind. Its sole instrument of government consisted in a direct appeal to men's immediate personal interests or interested fears. It never appealed to, or endeavoured to put on its side, any noble, elevated, or generous principle of action. It repressed and discouraged all such, as being dangerous to it. In the same manner in which Napoleon cultivated the love of military distinction as his one means of action upon the multitude, so did Louis Philippe strive to immerse all France in the *culte des intérêts matériels*, in the worship of the cash-box and of the ledger. It is not, or it has not hitherto been, in the character of Frenchmen to be content with being thus governed. Some idea of grandeur, at least some feeling of national self-importance, must be associated with that which they will voluntarily follow and obey. The one inducement by which Louis Philippe's government recommended itself to the middle classes, was that revolutions and riots are bad for trade. They are so, but that is a very small part of the considerations which ought to determine our estimation of them. While classes were thus appealed to through

their class interests, every individual who, either from station, reputation, or talent, appeared worth gaining, was addressed through whatever personal interest, either of money or vanity, he was thought most likely to be accessible to. Many were attempted unsuccessfully, many successfully. Corruption was carried to the utmost pitch that the resources at the disposal of the government admitted of.

Accordingly, the best spirits in France had long felt, and felt each year more and more, that the government of Louis Philippe was a demoralizing government; that under its baneful influence all public principle, or public spirit, or regard for political opinions, was giving way more and more to selfish indifference in the propertied classes generally, and in many of the more conspicuous individuals, to the shameless pursuit of personal gain.

It is almost superfluous to adduce testimonies to facts of such universal notoriety; but it is worth while to refer to two documents, which demonstrate, after all that has been said of the unexpectedness of the events of February, how clearly it was seen by competent judges that, from the principles on which the government had long been carried on, such a termination of its career was almost certain to happen at some time, and might happen at any time.

One of these documents is a speech of M. de Tocqueville, delivered in the Chamber of Deputies on the 27th of January 1848, exactly four weeks before the Revolution. In this remarkable and almost prophetic discourse, M. de Tocqueville said that in the class which possessed and exercised political rights, 'political morality is declining; it is already deeply

tainted, it becomes more deeply so from day to day. More and more, opinions, sentiments, and ideas of a public character are supplanted by personal interests, personal aims, points of view borrowed from private interest and private life.' He called the members of the hostile majority themselves to witness, whether in the five, ten, or fifteen years last elapsed, the number of those who voted for them from private motives was not perpetually increasing, the number who did so from political opinion constantly diminishing?

'Let them tell me if around them, under their eyes, there is not gradually establishing itself in public opinion a singular species of tolerance for the facts I have been speaking of,—if, by little and little, there is not forming itself a vulgar and low morality, according to which the man who possesses political rights, owes it to himself, owes it to his children, to his wife, to his relations, to make a personal use of those rights for their benefit;—if this is not gradually raising itself into a sort of duty of the father of a family?—if this new morality, unknown in the great times of our history, unknown at the commencement of our Revolution, is not developing itself more and more, and making daily progress in the public mind.'

He described the acts by which the government of Louis Philippe had made itself accessary to this decline of public spirit. In the first place, by the gigantic strides which it was making towards despotism:

'The government has re-possessed itself, especially in these last years, of greater powers, a larger measure of influence, prerogatives more manifold and more considerable, than it had possessed at any other epoch. It has become infinitely more powerful than could have been imagined, not only by those who conferred, but by those who accepted, the reins of government in 1830.'

The mischief was aggravated by the indirect and crafty manner in which it was brought about.

'It was by reclaiming old powers, which were thought to have been abolished in 1830; by reviving old rights, which were supposed to have been annulled; by bringing again into activity old laws, which were believed to have been abrogated, and applying new ones in a different meaning from that in which they had been enacted. . . . Do you suppose that this crooked and surreptitious manner of gradually regaining ascendancy, as it were by surprise, through other means than those granted by the constitution,—think you that this strange spectacle of address and *savoir-faire*, publicly exhibited for several years on so vast a theatre, to a whole nation looking on,—that this spectacle was of a nature to improve public morals?'

And supposing, by a great concession, that the men who wrought this evil were themselves persuaded that it was good—

'They have not the less effected it by means which morality disavows. They have achieved it by taking men not by their honourable side, but by their bad side—by their passions, their weaknesses, their personal interests, often their vices. . . . . And to accomplish these things, it has been necessary for them to call to their assistance, to honour with their favour, to introduce into their daily intercourse, men who wished neither for honest ends nor honest means; who desired but the gross satisfaction of their private interests, by the aid of the power confided to them.'

After citing one scandalous instance of a high office of trust conferred on a person notoriously corrupt, M. de Tocqueville added:—'I do not regard this fact as a solitary one; I consider it the symptom of a general evil, the most salient trait of an entire course of policy. *In the paths which you have chosen for yourselves, you had need of such men.*'

As a consequence of these things, he appealed to the whole body of his hearers, whether it was not true that—

'The sentiment, the instinct of instability, that sentiment, the precursor of revolutions, which often presages them, and sometimes causes them to take place—already exists to a most serious degree in the country. . . . . Is there not a breeze of revolution in the air? This breeze, no one knows where it rises, whence it comes, nor (believe me) whom it sweeps away. . . . . It is my deep and deliberate conviction, that public morals are degenerating, and that the degeneracy of public morals will lead you in a short, perhaps a very short time, to new revolutions. . . . . Have you at this very hour the certainty of a to-morrow? Do you know what may happen in France in a year, in a month, perhaps even in a day? You do not; but this you know, that the tempest is in the horizon, that it is marching towards you; will you suffer yourselves to be overtaken by it?

'Several changes in legislation have been talked of. I am much inclined to believe that such changes are not only useful, but necessary. I believe in the utility of electoral reform, in the urgency of excluding placemen from parliament. But I am not so senseless as to be unaware, that it is not the laws, in themselves, which make the destiny of peoples; no, it is not the mechanism of the laws, which produces the great events of the world; it is the spirit of the government. Keep your laws if you will, though I think it a great error; keep them—keep even the men, if you like, I for my part will be no obstacle; but, in Heaven's name, change the spirit of the government, for, I say it again, that spirit is hurrying you to the abyss.'

The other document which shall be cited in proof that the natural consequences of Louis Philippe's system of government were foreseen by near observers, is the evidence of M. Goudchaux, banker at Paris,

and for some months Minister of Finance to the Republic; delivered before the Commission d'Enquête on the events of May and June last. M. Goudchaux, who said in his place in the Assembly that the Revolution had come too soon, nevertheless declared in his evidence, that he and some of his political friends felt so convinced that it was impending, that, a few days before it broke out, they held a meeting at his house, to arrange a list of names for a Provisional Government; but disagreed on the question whether to admit or to exclude from the number M. Louis Blanc.

The Revolution, therefore, which appears to Lord Brougham in the singular character of an event without a cause, was so much the natural result of known causes, as to be capable of being foreseen. And when what had been foreseen by the more discerning, actually came to pass, even the undiscerning recognised in it the legitimate consequence of a just popular indignation. M. Garnier-Pagès was justified in his apostrophe, in the National Assembly, on the 24th of last October:—

'I ask it of everybody:—Did not every one, in the first days, agree that the Revolution which had been accomplished was moral, still more than political? Did not every one agree that this great renovation had been preceded by a real and terrible reaction against corruption, and emanated from all that was honest and honourable in the hearts of the French nation?'*

* 'Je le demande à tous:—Est-ce que tout le monde, dans les premiers jours, ne convenait pas que la Révolution qui venait de s'accomplir était politique et morale, morale surtout? Est-ce que tout le monde ne convenait pas que cette grande rénovation avait été précédée par une réaction réelle et terrible contre la corruption, et faite par tout ce qu'il y avait d'honnête dans le cœur de la France?'

Contrast these representations of the state of the national mind preceding the Revolution, by persons really acquainted with it, with the following specimen from Lord Brougham's pamphlet:—'The lesson is taught by the experience of February 1848, that to change' the form of government of France 'requires no long series of complaints, no suffering from oppression, whether chronic or acute, no indignation at abuses, no combination of parties to effect a change, no preparation for converting the opposition to a ministry into a war with a dynasty.' The writer has not the most ordinary knowledge of the public events of his own time. The war with the dynasty began as early as 1831, and was first compelled to mask itself under opposition to a ministry, when the laws of September had made it impossible to attack, through the press, either the King or the monarchy, without the certainty of being ruined and reduced to silence. But public feeling, once sufficiently roused, will force a way through all obstacles; and in spite of the gagging laws, much of the opposition to the Government had latterly become almost avowedly a war against the King. 'There was little personal disrespect shown,' says the pamphlet, 'towards the illustrious Prince.' The main political feature of the six months preceding February was the reform banquets, and the most marked circumstance attending these was the premeditated omission, in most of them, to drink the King's health. Lord Brougham reproaches the reformers with not trusting to 'repeated discussion and the exertion of the popular influence' for effecting a reform of the constitution by a vote of parliament. They had little encouragement to rely

on such means. The very corruption which was ruining the government in the general opinion, was strengthening it with the narrow and jobbing class who returned a majority of the Chamber. A general election had occurred the summer previous, and the ministerial majority had gained, not lost, in numbers by it. Lord Brougham boasts, through many pages, of the feat performed by Lord Grey's ministry in effecting a great change in the Constitution (the first such change in history which was so accomplished) without an insurrection. But was it without the *fear* of an insurrection? If there had been no chance of a rising, would the House of Lords have waived their opposition, or the Duke of Wellington have thrown up the game in despair? If, in England, the mere demonstration of popular force sufficed to effect what elsewhere required its actual exertion, it was because the majority of even the unreformed House of Commons was elected by constituencies sufficiently large for a really powerful and unanimous popular determination to reach it; and because the political usages and long-standing liberties of England allowed of popular meetings and political unions without limit or stint. To the French reformers these means of peaceful demonstration were denied. The nearest approach to them allowed by French law, was the reform dinners; and these, as soon as they began to produce an effect, the government forbade; reviving for that purpose a decree passed in the stormiest period of the first Revolution. It was when this last resource was denied, that popular indignation burst forth, and the monarchy was destroyed.

There never was a greater blunder than to speak of

the French Republic as an 'improvised government' —'struck out at a heat'—'the result of a sudden thought'—'span new, untried, and even unthought of.' The Revolution, indeed, was unpremeditated, spontaneous; the republican leaders had no more to do with effecting it, than the socialist leaders had with the insurrection of June last. But the republicans, immediately after the crisis, became the directors of the movement, because they alone, of the various sections of the French people, had not to improvise a political creed, but already possessed one. It would require a degree of ignorance of French political discussion from 1830 to 1848, which one would not willingly impute even to the author of the 'Letter to the Marquess of Lansdowne,' not to know that during those years, republicanism, instead of being 'unthought of,' had both been thought of and talked of, in every variety of tone, by friends and enemies, in all corners of France; that several formidable insurrections had broken out in its name; that many well-known chiefs had been, and some still were, in the prisons of Ham, Doullens, and Mont St. Michel, for acts done in its behalf; and that, except the remaining adherents of the elder branch, a republic entered into the calculations of all who speculated either on the dethronement of Louis Philippe, or on the minority of his successor. If William III. had been dethroned for following the example of James II., would the people of this country have put a child on the throne, or sent for some other Prince of Orange from beyond sea? Would they not, almost certainly, have fallen back on the Commonwealth? What the English of the seventeenth century would assuredly

have done, the French might do in the nineteenth without exciting surprise. And it was the more to be expected that they would do so, since constitutional royalty is in itself a thing as uncongenial to the character and habits of the French, or any other people of the European Continent, as it is suited to the tone of thought and feeling characteristic of England.

From causes which might be traced in the history and development of English society and government, the general habit and practice of the English mind is compromise. No idea is carried out to more than a small portion of its legitimate consequences. Neither by the generality of our speculative thinkers, nor in the practice of the nation, are the principles which are professed ever thoroughly acted upon; something always stops the application half way. This national habit has consequences of very various character, of which the following is one. It is natural to minds governed by habit (which is the character of the English more than of any other civilized people) that their tastes and inclinations become accommodated to their habitual practice; and as in England no principle is ever fully carried out, discordance between principles and practice has come to be regarded, not only as the natural, but as the desirable state. This is not an epigram, or a paradox, but a sober description of the tone of sentiment commonly found in Englishmen. They never feel themselves safe unless they are living under the shadow of some conventional fiction—some agreement to say one thing and mean another. Now, constitutional royalty is precisely an arrangement of this description. The very essence

of it is, that the so-called sovereign does not govern, ought not to govern, is not intended to govern; but yet must be held up to the nation, be addressed by the nation, and even address the nation, as if he or she did govern. This, which was originally a compromise between the friends of popular liberty and those of absolute monarchy, has established itself as a sincere feeling in the mind of the nation; who would be offended, and think their liberties endangered, if a king or a queen meddled any further in the government than to give a formal sanction to all acts of parliament, and to appoint as ministry, or rather as minister, the person whom the majority in parliament pointed out; and yet would be unaffectedly shocked, if every considerable act of government did not profess and pretend to be the act and mandate of the person on the throne. The English are fond of boasting that they do not regard the theory, but only the practice of institutions; but their boast stops short of the truth; they actually prefer that their theory should be at variance with their practice. If any one proposed to them to convert their practice into a theory, he would be scouted. It appears to them unnatural and unsafe, either to do the thing which they profess, or to profess the thing which they do. A theory which purports to be the very thing intended to be acted upon, fills them with alarm; it seems to carry with it a boundless extent of unforeseeable consequences. This disagreeable feeling they are only free from, when the principles laid down are obviously matters of convention, which, it is agreed on all parts, are not to be pressed home.

It is otherwise in France: so much so, that few

Frenchmen can understand this singular characteristic of the English mind; which, seen imperfectly and by glimpses, is the origin of those accusations of profound hypocrisy, mistakenly brought by many foreigners against the English nation. Englishmen, on their part, can in general as little understand the comparative simplicity and directness of Continental notions. The French impatience of discrepancy between theory and practice, seems to them fancifulness, and want of good sense. It was a Frenchman, not an Englishman, who erected the English practice of constitutional monarchy into a theory: but his maxim, '*le roi règne et ne gouverne pas*,' took no root on the other side of the Channel. The French had no relish for a system, the forms of which were intended to simulate something at variance with acknowledged fact. Those who were for a king at all, wanted one who was a substantial power in the State, and not a cypher: while, if the will of the nation was to be the government—if the king was to do nothing but register the nation's decrees—both the reason and the feelings of the French were in favour of having those decrees pronounced directly by the people's own delegates.

A constitutional monarchy, therefore, was likely in France, as it is likely in every other country in Continental Europe, to be but a brief halt on the road from a despotism to a republic. But though a republic, for France, was the most natural and congenial of all the forms of free government, it had two great hindrances to contend with. One was, the political indifference of the majority—the result of want of education, and of the absence of habits of dis-

cussion and participation in public business. The other was the dread inspired by the remembrance of 1793 and 1794; a dread which, though much weakened since 1830, did and does in some measure subsist, notwithstanding what was so promptly done by the Provisional Government to disconnect the new republic from whatever was sanguinary in the recollections of the old. These two causes prevented the French nation in general from demanding or wishing for a republican government; and as long as those causes continue, they will render its existence, even now when it is established, more or less precarious.

The Provisional Government knew this. They had no illusions. They were not blind to any of their difficulties. The generation of which they were a part, has neither the ardent faith nor the boundless hope which belonged to the era of its predecessors, and which made it easy for an entire people to be transformed into heroes. It has been publicly stated, that of the eleven members of the Provisional Government, though all or nearly all were republicans, M. Ledru Rollin alone, before the 24th of February, thought that the time had yet come for a republic: and even he, it would appear, in reliance less on what the public sentiment already was, than on what it might in his opinion be made. It will be the immortal glory of these men with posterity, that they did not need the illusions of political inexperience to make them heroes; that they could act out their opinions with calm determination, without exaggerating to their own minds the measure of success, the amount of valuable result, which probably awaited them. They might regret that the nation was not

better prepared for the new régime; but when the old had perished, it was not for them to decide that the institutions of their own preference were too good for their countrymen, but to try whether a republican government, administered by sincere republicans, if it did not find the French people republicans, could make them so.

With this noble hope the members of the Provisional Government, if intentions can be judged from acts, accepted the power which was thrust upon them: and whoever passes judgment on their proceedings according to any other idea of the problem which lay before them, is an incapable appreciator of the situation and its exigency, and grossly unjust to the men.

Never had any man or set of men, suddenly raised to power, a more complicated task before them. It was a more difficult achievement in their case to govern at all, than in the case of almost any other government to govern well. They were nominal dictators, without either soldiers or police whom they could call to their assistance, without even any organized body of adherents. They were absolute rulers, with no means of enforcing obedience. And they actually did rule Paris, for two whole months succeeding a revolution, by means of such obedience only as was given voluntarily. This is the part of their conduct which, to a certain extent, has had least injustice done to it, since it has commonly been admitted to have been a difficult and a meritorious achievement: but the unwilling acknowledgment of merit has stopped in generals; there is hardly one of the acts by which this great feat was accomplished,

that has not since been made a subject of reproach to them; though not until the emergency had passed away, and conduct of which the whole benefit had been reaped, could now be criticised at leisure. Lord Brougham, among others, cannot tolerate the speeches by which they calmed the popular effervescence—speeches for which, at the time when they were made, the speakers were worshipped almost as gods by the frightened Parisian bourgeoisie. One would have thought that men whose almost sole engine of government, for months, which in times of revolution are ages, was the effect which they could produce by haranguing an armed populace—who had daily to persuade that populace to forego its demands, at the peril of their lives if it persisted in them—and who succeeded in that object, and kept the frame of government in existence until things became quiet, and authority resumed its course—might claim some indulgence as to the means by which this truly wonderful success was attained. One hardly expected to hear them taunted with fulsome flattery and mob-sycophancy, because they gave fair words to those whose good-will was all they had to depend on for preventing confusion. One would have thought, too, that a people, or a populace if the term is preferred, who actually were induced, by fair words alone, to make themselves a voluntary police, and preserve such order in a great capital that the offences committed were fewer than in ordinary times, deserved some praise from their temporary rulers, and might receive it without subjecting these to any imputation of time-serving. But Lord Brougham cannot admit that any praise can be due to a people who make

barricades, and turn out a government. One of the most unworthy points in his pamphlet, is the abusive tone and language into which he breaks out, every time that he has occasion to speak of the working classes; of those among them at least who meddle in insurrections, or think they have anything to do with the government except to obey it. 'Rabble,' 'dregs of the populace,' 'armed ruffians,' are his expressions for the most intelligent and best-conducted labouring class, take it for all in all, to be found on the earth's surface—the artisans of Paris. His determination to refuse them every particle of honour must be inveterate indeed, since he will not allow them even courage; he will not so much as admit that they actually fought!—the many hundreds of killed and wounded being, it must be supposed, the product of accident.

Even fairer opponents than the pamphleteer, while giving deserved credit to the Provisional Government for having overcome the tremendous difficulty of governing and preserving order, have passed a severe judgment upon the measures of legislation and administration which were adopted by this temporary authority. Some of their acts are censured as exceeding the legitimate powers of a Provisional Government, and deciding questions which ought to have been reserved for the appointed representatives of the nation. Others are condemned as ill-judged and pernicious in themselves.

How far these charges are merited it will be easier to judge, if we place ourselves in the situation of these men, and endeavour to realize, in imagination, the demands which their position made upon them.

What would have been the proper conduct of men who, believing a democratic republic to be not only in itself the sole form of government which secures due attention to the interests of the great body of the community, but also calculated to work well in their own country—believing, however, that the majority of their countrymen were indifferent, and a great portion averse to it—found themselves unexpectedly placed, by an insurrection of their own supporters, in a position in which it seemed in their power to direct, for some time to come, the current of events? Were they to attempt nothing in favour of their own opinions? Were they to assume no initiative? Were they merely to keep things quiet and *in statu quo*, until the apathetic majority could come together and spontaneously determine whether they would have what these, the leaders, thought the best institutions, or what they regarded as the worst? Were the noblest spirits and most enlightened minds in the country to employ an opportunity such as scarcely occurs once in a thousand years, in simply waiting on the whims and prejudices of the many? Were they who, even on the showing of this pamphlet, formed the only party which had fixed principles and a strong public spirit, to leave all to the decision of those who either had only mean and selfish objects, or had not yet acquired any opinions? Had they done so, they would have deserved to be stigmatized in history as the veriest cravens who ever marred by irresolution the opening prospects of a people.

The democratic principles of these men forbade them to impose despotically, even if they had the power, their political opinions upon an unwilling

majority; and compelled them to refer all their acts to the ultimate ratification of a freely and fairly elected representative assembly. But the sovereignty of the whole people does not mean the passiveness of individuals—the negation of all impulse, of all guidance, of all initiative, on the part of the better and wiser few. The more firmly resolved were these men to stand by the government of the majority even if it did not adopt their opinions, the more incumbent was it on them to spare no pains for bringing over the majority to them. Their great task was to republicanize the public mind; to strive by all means, apart from coercion or deception, that the coming election should produce an assembly of sincere republicans. And since this could not but, at the best, be regarded as doubtful, they were bound, as far as prudence permitted, to adopt provisionally as many valuable measures as possible; such measures as the future assembly, though it might have hesitated to pass, would not perhaps venture to abrogate. These two things the Provisional Government did in some measure attempt; and though the enemies of popular institutions have clamoured against them as if they had carried both these courses of action to the most abominable extremities, posterity will have more reason, not for censure, but for regret, that they did not venture far enough in either.

Among their proceedings which aimed at the first object, that of republicanizing the nation, those which have been most commented on were the sending of the much-talked-of commissioners to the departments, and M. Ledru Rollin's and M. Carnot's famous bulletins and circulars.

The deputation of commissioners into all parts of France, to explain what had taken place, to represent the new government, and supersede the authorities appointed under the previous régime, seems so natural and indispensable a proceeding, that the storm of disapprobation which it encountered is only a proof of the blind suspicion and distrust with which the provinces received all they did, and which was one of the greatest difficulties of their situation. Much scandal was given by an expression in M. Ledru Rollin's instructions to the commissioners, telling them that their powers were unlimited. Was it not the very necessity of the case, that the authority of the Provisional Government was for the time unlimited, that is, unfettered by any constitutional restraints? and could they have gone on without imparting to their sole representatives in the provinces, subject to responsibility to themselves, the fulness of their own power? Not the power assumed, but the use made of it, is, in a time of revolution, the criterion of right or wrong. The Provisional Government knew that these commissioners, so ridiculously compared to the terrible proconsuls of the Convention, were in small danger of being tempted to any over-exertion of power. They knew that their delegates, like themselves, depended on voluntary obedience for being able to exercise any power at all. These formidable despots, who are painted in as frightful colours as if they had carried with them a guillotine *en ambulance*, were, more than once, simply taken by the hand and led out of the town on their way back to Paris. The selection of persons for these appointments has also been much cavilled at. Lord Brougham revives the

almost forgotten calumny, that 'one of his' (M. Ledru Rollin's) 'commissioners had been a felon, condemned to the galleys, and had undergone the punishment.' Any one who has taken as much pains to be informed as is implied in merely reading the French newspapers, knows that the person alluded to was not a delegate of the government, or of M. Ledru Rollin, but of the clubs. Mistakes no doubt were made in the rapid selection of so great a number of persons, in whom zeal for the principles of the Republic being the most essential requisite, excluded many persons in other respects eligible. But the maligners of the Provisional Government may be challenged to deny, that the great majority of the selections did honour both to the choosers and to the chosen; that a large proportion acquired, in the districts to which they were sent, great and well-merited popularity, and contributed largely to rally those parts of France to the cause of the Republic; that many are now (or were, up to M. Léon Faucher's recent ejection *en masse*) prefects, with general approval, of the departments to which they were delegated; and that where errors had been committed, they were at once corrected, as soon as brought to light.

As little ground is there for the embittered denunciations against the circulars and proclamations. Two only of these documents gave cause for just criticism: the famous sixteenth bulletin, and M. Carnot's circular. The former was withdrawn on the very day of its appearance, and was afterwards declared to have been published by the mistake of a clerk, the draft never having been seen or approved by the minister or by his secretary. M. Carnot, in

his celebrated circular, though he expressed himself unguardedly, could never, by any candid reader, be supposed to mean anything but what he has always declared that he did mean: to impress on those to whom the document was addressed, that it was more important, at that particular juncture, that the assembly to be selected should consist of sincere republicans, than that it should contain the greatest possible number of lettered and instructed men; he knowing, as he had good reason to know, that in the greater part of France, most of those who had gained a reputation as men of letters and acquirements under the old régime, like most others who had thriven under that corrupt system, were not to be relied on by the new. It is false that M. Carnot disparaged knowledge, or panegyrized ignorance. He declared, on the contrary, that to make laws and a constitution was a task for the intellectual *élite* of France. But were nine hundred men of talent, nine hundred talkers, needed, or capable of being made useful, for such a task? While thinking only of the exigencies of the moment, M. Carnot gave expression, perhaps unwittingly, to a great general truth. It is not the business of a numerous representative assembly to make laws. Laws are never well made but by a few—often best by only one. The office of a representative body is not to make the laws, but to see that they are made by the right persons, and to be the organ of the nation for giving or withholding its ratification of them. For these functions, good sense, good intentions, and attachment to the principles of free government, are the most important requisites. Highly cultivated intellect is not essential,

even if we could expect to find it, in more than a select few; and as for that superficial cleverness—that command of words, and skilful management of commonplaces, which pass for talent and instruction on the hustings, at public meetings, and in society—most really cultivated persons, we believe, are agreed in opinion, that of this all legislative assemblies have, and are likely to have, a much greater abundance than at all conduces to the ends for which they purport to exist.

When such are the worst things that can be charged against the Provisional Government, their conduct must indeed be free from serious reproach. In this particular matter, the management of the elections, their behaviour, in all that is known of it, will bear comparison with that of any government in any country. Probably no government that ever existed, certainly no French government, practised so entire an abstinence from illegitimate influence—from any employment whatever of government influence, to procure elections in their own favour. It is not intended to claim merit for them on this account. Their principles required it: but let it be said, that under great temptations they were true to their principles. It is an unfortunate fact, that in many things besides this, had they been less disinterested, less upright, less determined to rely solely on the power of honesty, they would probably have effected more both for themselves and for their cause. It is because they persisted in their resolve to owe nothing to any other than fair means, that they have been precipitated from power; and among many varieties of calumny, have not escaped even

those charges from which their whole conduct had borne the stamp of the most evident determination to keep free.

It would be astonishing (if the impudence of party calumny could astonish any one) to observe what are the crimes of which the detractors of this noble body of men have accused, and are not ashamed still to continue accusing them. They are even now spoken of in newspapers as if their management of the elections had been something almost unexampled in tyranny and turpitude; and all this time neither a bribe nor a threat, either to an elector or to a body of electors, has been proved, or it may almost be said alleged, against them. If the verdict of history was gathered from the assertions of cotemporaries, what contempt would it inspire for the judgment of posterity on eminent characters, when we find that these men have been charged individually with embezzling money from the Treasury; that even M. de Lamartine has thought it necessary to lay before the public the details of his private fortune and pecuniary transactions, in order to extinguish the slander beyond possibility of revival! Not without cause; for though malignity itself is not shameless enough any longer to repeat the charge against him personally, his exculpation has not liberated his colleagues; and there have appeared within these few weeks, in more than one English newspaper, articles in which the financial administration of the Provisional Government has been spoken of as one mass of profligate malversation. There is nothing which the spirit that pursues these men would not dare to assert, when it can venture on this. One member of the Provisional Government has

been made a mark for greater inveteracy of assault than the rest—M. Ledru Rollin. Everybody has heard scandalous stories concerning him; and in his case, some of these were specific, and accompanied with names and circumstances. If those which did not enter into particulars, had no better foundation than those which did, M. Ledru Rollin, as to pecuniary integrity, is the statesman of most unimpeachable character in Europe; for every accusation of the kind that we are acquainted with, which had any tangible character, was investigated by the Commission d'Enquête, and disproved by the evidence of the persons alleged to have been connected with it. In England, his assailants, and those of his colleagues, seized the opportunity of the appearance of a mass of evidence which they knew nobody would read, to affirm (it must in charity be supposed, without having read it themselves) that it substantiated all the floating rumours of misconduct, and covered the members of the government with indelible disgrace. In France, it was felt even by their enemies to have entirely failed of eliciting the disclosures which had been expected from it. M. Ledru Rollin instantly rose many degrees in public estimation, and has occupied, since those documents appeared, a position of greater political importance than before.

To speak now of those measures of the Provisional Government which partook of a legislative character; for none of which Lord Brougham can find any other purpose, than 'to retain the people's favour.' Assuredly to retain that favour, at such a time, was as virtuous an object, considering what depended on it, as any of those which influence the course of legisla-

tion in ordinary times. Yet, if it is meant to be said that for the sake of the people's favour they performed one act, issued one single edict, which did not, in and for itself, commend itself to them as a thing fit to be done, the assertion is gratuitous, and in opposition to all that is known of the case. Many things were done hastily, to make sure of their being done at all: some were done, which it has since been necessary to undo; but no one thing can they be shown to have done, which was not such as, in their deliberate opinion, ought to have been done.

Lord Brougham regards the immediate abolition of colonial slavery as a hasty measure, and beyond the powers of a Provisional Government. Considering what proved to be the character of the National Assembly, who can say, if this great act of justice had been left for it to do, how long a time would have passed before it would have found the leisure or the will to perform it? Financial difficulties, which have gathered so heavily round the infant Republic, would have been enough of themselves to have caused the postponement of emancipation, if it was to be preceded, not followed, by compensation. The Government did at once what required to be so done; they struck off the fetters of the slave, knowing, and because they knew, that the act, once done, was irrevocable. By thus acting, they not only made sure from the first, that, whatever else might happen, some hundreds of thousands of human beings should have permanent cause to bless the Revolution, but averted the chances of civil war and massacre consequent on the indefinite withholding, in such circumstances, of so clear a right. The indemnification of the owners

they left to the future Assembly; but committed the French nation, as far as it was in the power of a government to commit them, to that act of justice.

Lord Brougham talks also of 'their incredible decree making all judges hold office during pleasure, and by popular election;' thus placing 'the administration of justice in the hands of the populace.' After this positive assertion, some persons may be surprised to be told that no such decree ever existed. What the writer was confusedly thinking about, must have been the act which removed about half-a-dozen judicial functionaries from office, declaring in the preamble that the inamovability of judges was inconsistent with republican principles. They may have been, and we think they were, wrong in this; but the opinion is one held by a large portion of the republican party; and several of the best writers on judicial establishments, both in France and in England, have sanctioned it by their authority.

A more important subject than this is M. de Lamartine's circular to the diplomatic agents of the French government, otherwise known as his 'Manifeste aux Puissances,' declaratory of the foreign policy of the new Republic. This has been made by Lord Brougham the occasion of an attack on M. de Lamartine, which surpasses, in its defiance of fact, almost every other specimen of mis-statement in this most uncandid pamphlet.

The Provisional Government, he alleges, by this manifesto—

'Held out the hand of fellowship to the insurgents of all nations. . . . . M. Lamartine does not, and he cannot deny, that he assured the people of all other countries of assistance

from France in case they should fail to work out by force their own emancipation; in other words, he promised that France would help all insurgents who might be defeated by their lawful rulers in their rebellion against established authority. Beyond all question this is the very worst thing that France has done; the most sinning against all principle, the most hurtful to herself and to the world.'

In this style he continues for several pages, with the volume before him, or (as the context proves) fresh in his recollection, which, together with M. de Lamartine's defence of his administration, contains a reprint of every speech and every public document which proceeded from him during his 'three months in power.' Not one of these contains anything resembling what M. de Lamartine, as the organ of the French government, is here charged with having said.

The 'Manifeste aux Puissances' is, both in spirit and in letter, a declaration of the intention of the French Republic to remain at peace. The only passages which admit of any other construction shall be quoted at length, to leave no excuse for those who may imagine that what is so positively asserted, and if false may be so easily confuted, must be true.

'The treaties of 1815 no longer exist as obligatory, in the opinion of the French Republic; but the territorial boundaries fixed by those treaties are an existing fact, which the Republic admits as a basis and a starting point in its relations with other countries.

'But, while the treaties of 1815 no longer exist except as a fact, to be modified by common agreement, and while the Republic openly declares that it has a right and a mission to arrive regularly and pacifically at such modifications—the good sense, the moderation, the conscience, the prudence of the Republic exist, and are for Europe a better and more

honourable guarantee than the letter of those treaties which she herself has so often violated or modified.

'Apply yourself, sir, to make this emancipation of the Republic from the treaties of 1815 understood and admitted, and to point out that this liberation is in no respect irreconcileable with the repose of Europe.

'We avow openly, that *if the hour of reconstruction for certain oppressed nationalities in Europe or elsewhere, appeared to us to have sounded in the decrees of Providence;* if Switzerland, our faithful ally since Francis I., were constrained or menaced in the movement which is taking place within her to lend an additional force to her band of democratic governments; if the independent states of Italy were invaded; if the attempt were made to impose limits or obstacles to their internal transformations, or to contest by force of arms their right of allying themselves with each other to consolidate a common country; the French Republic would consider itself at liberty to take arms for the protection of these legitimate movements of growth and of nationality.'

Does this promise 'that France would help all insurgents who might be defeated by their lawful rulers?' Can the most perverse ingenuity find in the preceding words one vestige of a suggestion of such an intention? M. de Lamartine claimed for his country the right, according to its own discretion and judgment, to assist any nation which might be struggling to free itself from the yoke of foreign conquerors. Assistance against foreigners, not against native rulers, was the only assistance of which the smallest mention was made; and the first of the supposed cases, that of an extinguished nationality, was the only one which had anything to do with 'insurrection,' even against foreigners. And in that there was not only no promise, but an express reservation

to the French government to judge for itself whether the 'hour of reconstruction' had arrived or not.

But it is not necessary to rely solely on the words of the manifesto. M. de Lamartine had the advantage, in this case, of being his own commentator. The manifesto was issued on the 4th of March. On the 19th of that month M. de Lamartine received a deputation of Poles, and a deputation of Irish on the 3rd of the month following. Both these deputations asked for the succour, which it is pretended that he had promised to all who might be defeated in a 'rebellion' against 'their lawful rulers.' To both all succour was refused. It is an abuse of the privilege of short memory to have already forgotten declarations which made no little sensation when delivered, and had no slight influence on the subsequent course of events in Europe.

To the Poles, he said—

'The Republic is not at war, either open or disguised, with any existing governments, so long as those governments do not declare themselves at war with France. The Republic will neither commit, nor voluntarily suffer to be committed, any act of aggression and violence against the Germanic nations. . . . The Provisional Government will not allow its policy to be altered by a foreign nation, however greatly we sympathize with it. We love Poland, Italy, all oppressed peoples; but above all, we love France, and we are responsible for its destinies, and perhaps for those of Europe at the present moment. This responsibility we will resign to no one but to the nation itself. The Republic must not, and will not, act in contradiction to its professions; the credit of its word is at stake, and shall never be forfeited. What have we said in our *manifeste aux puissances?* We said, thinking particularly of you—Whenever it shall appear to us that the time

fixed by Providence for the resurrection of a nationality unjustly blotted out from the map, has arrived, we shall fly to its assistance. But we have, with good right, reserved to France what belongs to her alone,—the appreciation of the hour, the moment, the justice, the cause, and the means by which it would be fitting for us to intervene. The means which up to this time we have chosen and resolved on, are pacific.'

To the Irish, after expressing a warm sympathy with Ireland as identified with 'liberty courageously defended against privilege,' that is, with the conquests of peaceful agitation, he said,

'Any other encouragements it would be improper for us to give, or for you to receive. I have already said it *à propos* of Switzerland, of Germany, of Belgium and Italy. I repeat it in the case of every nation which has disputes to adjust, either within itself or with its government. Those whose own blood is not concerned in the affairs of a people, are not free to intervene in its affairs. We are of no party, in Ireland or elsewhere, except the party of justice, of liberty, and of the people's welfare.

'We are at peace, and we desire to remain in friendly and equal relations, not with this or the other portion of Great Britain, but with Great Britain itself. We think this peace useful and honourable, not only for Great Britain and the French Republic, but for the human race. We will do no act, speak no word, utter no insinuation contradictory to the principles of the reciprocal inviolability of nations, which we have proclaimed, and of which the Continent is already reaping the fruits. The monarchy had its treaties and its diplomatists; our diplomatists are peoples, and their sympathies are our treaties. We must be senseless to exchange this diplomacy in open daylight, for underhand and separate alliances with parties, even the most legitimate, in the countries which surround us. We have no title to judge them, nor to prefer one of them to another. Declaring ourselves friends of one, would be proclaiming ourselves enemies of another.

We do not desire to be enemies of any of your countrymen; we desire, on the contrary, to dissipate by the loyalty of our republican word, the prepossessions and prejudices which may exist between our neighbours and ourselves.'

Many will recollect (for much notice was taken of it at the time) the passage which followed these last words: declaring that he never would imitate the conduct of Pitt, when, even during an acknowledged war, he abetted Frenchmen in carrying on in La Vendée an armed contest against their own countrymen.

This contrast between what M. de Lamartine really said, on the subject of affording aid to foreign insurrection, and what it suits the author of the pamphlet to make him say, speaks for itself without further comment.

What was really new and peculiar in M. de Lamartine's manifesto, consisted, as has been seen by the extracts, in two things. He repudiated the treaties of 1815; and he asserted a right, though without admitting an obligation, to afford military aid to nations attempting to free themselves from a foreign yoke.

To discuss these fundamental points of M. de Lamartine's declaration in the manner which they deserve, would require much more space than can be afforded to it. The topics are among the most delicate in political ethics; they are concerned with that nice question, the line which separates the highest right from the commencement of wrong; where one person regards as heroic virtue, what another looks upon as breach of faith, and criminal aggression. To one like Lord Brougham, who is ostentatiously and to his inmost core a man of the last century, M. de

Lamartine's principles must naturally appear extremely scandalous.

M. de Lamartine repudiated certain treaties. He declared them no longer binding on France. Treaties are national engagements; and engagements, when in themselves allowable, and made by persons who have a right to make them, should be kept: who ever denied it? But another thing must be admitted also, and always has been admitted by the morality and common sense of mankind. This is, that engagements extorted by a certain kind and measure of external force, are not binding. This doctrine is peculiarly applicable to national engagements imposed by foreign armies. If a nation has, under compulsion, surrendered its independence to a conqueror, or even submitted to sacrifices of territory or dignity, greater than according to general opinion could reasonably be imposed, the moral sentiment of mankind has never held engagements of this sort to preclude the nation from re-asserting its independence, or from again resorting to arms, in order that what had been lost by force might be recovered by force. On what other principle were Prussia and Austria justified in breaking their treaties with Napoleon after his disasters in Russia? This was the situation of France with respect to the treaties of 1815. They were imposed by conquest, and were agreed to and signed by an intrusive government, while the territory of the nation was occupied by foreign armies. The nation did not consent to them, for an equivalent advantage, but submitted to them, because it was prostrate at the feet of the invaders, and had no power to refuse anything which they might think fit

to demand. Such treaties are never understood to bind nations any longer than they find it their interest to acquiesce in them. M. de Lamartine had no need to rest on the fact that these same treaties have been repeatedly remodelled, and in some cases actually violated, by others of the contracting powers; as in the whole treatment of Poland, and remarkably in the very recent instance of Cracow. Nor is it even necessary to consider what the conditions of the treaties were, and to what extent they were dishonourable or injurious to France. Into this question M. de Lamartine did not profess to enter. He simply claimed the right of deciding it, as inherent in, and never foregone by, France. He denied any moral obligation to keep the treaties; but he disavowed any intention of breaking them. He accepted their territorial and other arrangements as existing facts, to be modified only by mutual consent, or by any of those contingencies which in themselves he deemed legitimate causes of war. If it was possible to have assumed any attitude towards those treaties more just and legitimate, more moderate and dignified, more wisely uniting the re-assertion of the nation's own proper freedom of action with the regard due to the just rights and security of its neighbours, the world will be obliged to any one who will point it out.

But the doctrine, that one government may make war upon another to assist an oppressed nationality in delivering itself from the yoke! This offends Lord Brougham more than everything else. Such a breach of received principles, such defiance of the law of nations, he finds no words too strong to designate. He can hardly think of anything bad enough to com-

pare it with. And it would be vain to deny, that in this he is backed by a large body of English opinion. Men who profess to be liberal, are shocked at the idea that the King of Sardinia should assist the Milanese in effecting their emancipation. That they should assert their own liberty might be endured; but that any one should help them to do it, is insupportable. It is classed with any unprovoked invasion of a foreign country: the Piedmontese, it would seem, not being fellow-countrymen of the people of Venice and Milan, while the Croats and the Bohemians are.

May we venture, once for all, to deny the whole basis of this edifying moral argumentation? To assist a people struggling for liberty is contrary to the law of nations: Puffendorf perhaps does not approve of it; Burlamaqui says nothing about it; it is not a *casus belli* set down in Vattel. So be it. But what is the law of nations? Something, which to call a law at all, is a misapplication of terms. The law of nations is simply the custom of nations. It is a set of international usages, which have grown up like other usages, partly from a sense of justice, partly from common interest or convenience, partly from mere opinion and prejudice. Now, are international usages the only kind of customs which, in an age of progress, are to be subject to no improvement? Are they alone to continue fixed, while all around them is changeable? The circumstances of Europe have so altered during the last century, that the constitutions, the laws, the arrangements of property, the distinctions of ranks, the modes of education, the opinions, the manners,—everything which affects the European nations separately and within themselves,

has changed so much, and is likely to change so much more, that in no great lapse of time they will be scarcely recognizable; and is it in their collective concerns, their modes of dealing with one another, that their circumstances, their exigencies, their duties and interests, are absolutely unchanged? What is called the law of nations is as open to alteration, as properly and even necessarily subject to it when circumstances change or opinions alter, as any other thing of human institution.

And, mark, in the case of a real law, of anything properly called a law, it is possible to maintain (however erroneous may be the opinion) that there is never any necessity for disobeying it; that it should be conformed to while it exists, the alternative being open of endeavouring to get it altered. But in regard to that falsely-called law, the law of nations, there is no such alternative; there is no ordinance or statute to repeal; there is only a custom, and the sole way of altering that, is to act in opposition to it. A legislature can repeal laws, but there is no Congress of nations to set aside international customs, and no common force by which to make the decisions of such a Congress binding. The improvement of international morality can only take place by a series of violations of existing rules; by a course of conduct grounded on new principles, and tending to erect these into customs in their turn.

Accordingly, new principles and practices are, and have been, continually introduced into the conduct of nations towards one another. To omit other instances, one entirely new principle was for the first time established in Europe, amidst general approbation,

within the last thirty years. It is, that whenever two countries, or two parts of the same country, are engaged in war, and the war either continues long undecided, or threatens to be decided in a way involving consequences repugnant to humanity or to the general interest, other countries have a right to step in; to settle among themselves what they consider reasonable terms of accommodation, and if these are not accepted, to interfere by force, and compel the recusant party to submit to the mandate. This new doctrine has been acted on by a combination of the great powers of Europe, in three celebrated instances: the interference between Greece and Turkey at Navarino; between Holland and Belgium at Antwerp; and between Turkey and Egypt at St. Jean d'Acre. It is too late in the day, after these precedents, to tell us that nations may not forcibly interfere with one another for the sole purpose of stopping mischief and benefiting humanity.

Can any exigency of this sort be stronger—is any motive to such interference of a more binding character—than that of preventing the liberty of a nation, which cares sufficiently for liberty to have risen in arms for its assertion, from being crushed and trampled out by tyrannical oppressors, and these not even of its own name and blood, but foreign conquerors? The customs, or falsely called laws of nations, laid down in the books, were made for an age like that of Louis XIV. to prevent powerful and ambitious despots from swallowing up the smaller states. For this purpose they were well adapted. But the great interests of civilized nations in the present age, are not those of territorial attack and defence, but of

liberty, just government, and sympathy of opinion. For this state of things what is called the law of nations was not made; and in no state of things at all analogous to this, has that so-called law ever been, in the smallest degree, attended to. There was once in Europe a time when, as much as at present, the most important interests of nations, both in their domestic and in their foreign concerns, were interests of opinion: it was the era of the Reformation. Did any one then pay the least regard to the pretended principle of non-interference? Was not sympathy of religion held to be a perfectly sufficient warrant for assisting anybody? Did not Protestants aid Protestants, wherever they were in danger from their own governments? Did not Catholics support all other Catholics in suppressing heresy? What religious sympathies were then, political ones are now; and every liberal government or people has a right to assist struggling liberalism, by mediation, by money, or by arms, wherever it can prudently do so; as every despotic government, when its aid is needed or asked for, never scruples to aid despotic governments.

A few observations may be permitted on the extreme contempt with which Lord Brougham denounces what he calls

'That new-fangled principle, that new speculation in the rights of independent states, the security of neighbouring governments, and indeed the happiness of all nations, which is termed *Nationality*, adopted as a kind of rule for the distribution of dominion. It seems,' he says, 'to be the notion preached by the Paris school of the Law of Nations and their foreign disciples, that one state has a right to attack another, provided upon statistically or ethnologically examining the classes and races of its subjects, these are found to vary. These

sages of the international law do not, like their predecessor Robespierre (of whom they compose panegyrics), hold exactly that France may legally assail any sovereign who refuses to abdicate, and bestow upon his people the blessings of republican anarchy. But they hold that if any sovereign has two dominions inhabited by different races, France has a right to assist either in casting off his authority. She may intimate to him that he can only continue to rule over the people who are his countrymen; or, if he was born in neither territory, that he must be put to his election, and choose which he will give up, but cannot be suffered to keep both.'

It is far from our intention to defend or apologise for the feelings which make men reckless of, or at least indifferent to, the rights and interests of any portion of the human species, save that which is called by the same name and speaks the same language as themselves. These feelings are characteristic of barbarians; in proportion as a nation is nearer to barbarism it has them in a greater degree: and no one has seen with deeper regret, not to say disgust, than ourselves, the evidence which recent events have afforded, that in the backward parts of Europe, and even (where better things might have been expected) in Germany, the sentiment of nationality so far outweighs the love of liberty, that the people are willing to abet their rulers in crushing the liberty and independence of any people not of their own race and language. But grievous as are these things, yet so long as they exist, the question of nationality is practically of the very first importance. When portions of mankind, living under the same government, cherish these barbarous feelings—when they feel toward each other as enemies, or as strangers, and indifferent to each other—they are scarcely capable of

merging into one and the same free people. They have not the fellow-feeling which would enable them to unite in maintaining their liberties, or in forming a paramount public opinion. The separation of feeling which mere difference of language creates, is already a serious hindrance to the establishment of a common freedom. When to this are added national or provincial antipathies, the obstacle becomes almost insuperable. The Government, being the only real link of union, is able, by playing off one race and people against another, to suppress the liberties of all. How can a free constitution establish itself in the Austrian empire, when Bohemians are ready to join in putting down the liberties of Viennese—when Croats and Servians are eager to crush Hungarians—and all unite in retaining Italy in slavery to their common despot? Nationality is desirable, as a means to the attainment of liberty; and this is reason enough for sympathizing in the attempts of Italians to re-constitute an Italy, and in those of the people of Posen to become a Poland. So long, indeed, as a people are incapable of self-government, it is often better for them to be under the despotism of foreigners than of natives, when those foreigners are more advanced in civilization and cultivation than themselves. But when their hour of freedom, to use M. de Lamartine's metaphor, has struck, without their having become merged and blended in the nationality of their conquerors, the re-conquest of their own is often an indispensable condition either to obtaining free institutions, or to the possibility, were they even obtained, of working them in the spirit of freedom.

There remains another measure of the Provisional Government, which opens a still wider field of difficult and important discussion than the preceding: the recognition of the *droit au travail;* of an obligation on society to find work and wages for all persons willing and able to work, who cannot procure employment for themselves.

This conduct of the Provisional Government will be judged differently, according to the opinions of the person judging, on one of the most controverted questions of the time. To one class of thinkers, the acknowledgment of the *droit au travail* may very naturally appear a portentous blunder; but it is curious to see who those are that most loudly profess this opinion. It is singular that this act of the Provisional Government should find its bitterest critics in the journalists who dilate on the excellence of the Poor-law of Elizabeth; and that the same thing should be so bad in France, which is perfectly right, in the opinion of the same persons, for England and Ireland. For the '*droit au travail*' is the Poor-law of Elizabeth, and nothing more. 'Aid guaranteed to those who cannot work, employment to those who can: this is the Act of Elizabeth, and this the promise, which it is so inexcusable in the Provisional Government to have made to France.

The Provisional Government not only offered no more than the promise made by the Act of Elizabeth, but offered it in a manner, and on conditions, far less objectionable. On the English parochial system, the law gives to every pauper a right to demand work, or support without work, for himself individually. The French Government contemplated no such right. It

contemplated action on the general labour market, not alms to the individual. Its scheme was, that when there was notoriously a deficiency of employment, the State should disburse sufficient funds to create the amount of productive employment which was wanting. But it gave no pledge that the State should find work for A or B. It reserved in its own hands the choice of its workpeople. It relieved no individual from the responsibility of finding an employer, and proving his willingness to exert himself. What it undertook was, that there should always be employment to be found. It is needless to enlarge on the incomparably less injurious influence of this intervention of the government in favour of the labourers collectively, than of the intervention of the parish to find employment individually for every able-bodied man who has not honesty or activity to seek and find it for himself.

The *droit au travail*, as intended by the Provisional Government, is not amenable to the commoner objections against a Poor-law. It is amenable to the most fundamental of the objections; that which is grounded on the principle of population. Except on that ground, no one is entitled to find fault with it. From the point of view of every one who disregards the principle of population, the *droit au travail* is the most manifest of moral truths, the most imperative of political obligations.

It appeared to the Provisional Government, as it must appear to every unselfish and open-minded person, that the earth belongs, first of all, to the inhabitants of it; that every person alive ought to have a subsistence, before any one has more; that whoso-

ever works at any useful thing, ought to be properly fed and clothed before any one able to work is allowed to receive the bread of idleness. These are moral axioms. But it is impossible to steer by the light of any single principle, without taking into account other principles by which it is hemmed in. The Provisional Government did not consider, what hardly any of their critics have considered—that although every one of the living brotherhood of humankind has a moral claim to a place at the table provided by the collective exertions of the race, no one of them has a right to invite additional strangers thither without the consent of the rest. If they do, what is consumed by these strangers should be subtracted from their own share. There is enough and to spare for all who *are* born; but there is not and cannot be enough for all who *might* be born; and if every person born is to have an indefeasible claim to a subsistence from the common fund, there will presently be no more than a bare subsistence for anybody, and a little later there will not be even that. The *droit au travail*, therefore, carried out according to the meaning of the promise, would be a fatal gift even to those for whose especial benefit it is intended, unless some new restraint were placed upon the capacity of increase, equivalent to that which would be taken away.

The Provisional Government then were in the right; but those are also in the right who condemn this act of the Provisional Government. Both have truth on their side. A time will come when these two portions of truth will meet together in harmony. The practical result of the whole truth might possibly be,

that all persons living should guarantee to each other, through their organ the State, the ability to earn by labour an adequate subsistence, but that they should abdicate the right of propagating the species at their own discretion and without limit: that all classes alike, and not the poor alone, should consent to exercise that power in such measure only, and under such regulations, as society might prescribe with a view to the common good. But before this solution of the problem can cease to be visionary, an almost complete renovation must take place in some of the most rooted opinions and feelings of the present race of mankind. The majority both of the upholders of old things and of the apostles of new, seem at present to agree in the opinion, that one of the most important and responsible of moral acts, that of giving existence to human beings, is a thing respecting which there scarcely exists any moral obligation, and in which no person's discretion ought on any pretence to be interfered with: a superstition which will one day be regarded with as much contempt, as any of the idiotic notions and practices of savages.

The declaration of the *droit au travail* was followed by the creation of *ateliers nationaux;* which, indeed, was its necessary consequence; since, in the great falling-off of employment through the industrial stagnation consequent on the Revolution, it would neither have been honourable nor safe to make no commencement of fulfilling the promise given, and circumstances did not allow of improvising any better mode of temporary employment for the destitute. Some such measure would have been necessary after any revolution. In

1830, large sums were expended in setting the unemployed to work. It was the misfortune, not the fault, of the Provisional Government, that the numbers requiring employment were so much greater than at any former period, and that the other circumstances of the case were such as to render the creation of these *ateliers* eventually the greatest calamity of the time; since it soon became impossible to provide funds for continuing them, while the first attempt to dissolve them was likely to produce, and did in fact produce, the outbreak in June.

It was not the fall of the monarchy, or the foundation of the republic, that caused the complete temporary paralysis of industry and commerce; it was the appearance on the stage, of the unexpected and indefinitely dreaded phenomenon of Socialism. And it was owing to the diffusion of Socialism among a portion of the labouring classes, that the first step towards the abolition of the *ateliers nationaux* became the signal for a determined attempt, by a large section of the workmen of Paris, to follow up the republican revolution by a Socialist one.

Let us here stop to consider what this new phenomenon termed Socialism is, in itself, and in its consequences.

Socialism is the modern form of the protest, which has been raised, more or less, in all ages of any mental activity, against the unjust distribution of social advantages.

No rational person will maintain it to be abstractedly just, that a small minority of mankind should be born to the enjoyment of all the external advantages which life can give, without earning them by

any merit or acquiring them by any exertion of their own, while the immense majority are condemned from their birth, to a life of never-ending, never-intermitting toil, requited by a bare, and in general a precarious, subsistence. It is impossible to contend that this is in itself just. It is possible to contend that it is expedient; since, unless persons were allowed, not only to retain for themselves, but to transmit to their posterity, the accumulated fruits of their exertions and of their favourable chances, they would not, it may be said, produce; or if they did, they would not preserve and accumulate their productions. It may also be said, that to deny to people the control of what they have thus produced and accumulated, and compel them to share it with those who, either through their fault or their misfortune, have produced and accumulated nothing, would be a still greater injustice than that of which the levellers complain; and that the path of least injustice, is to recognise individual property and individual rights of inheritance.

This is, in few words, the case which the existing order of society can make out against levellers. The levellers of the present day, with few exceptions, acknowledge the force of these arguments; and are by this distinguished from all former opponents of the law of property, and constituted, not levellers in the original sense of the word, but what they term themselves—Socialists.

We grant (they say) that it would be unjust to take from individual capitalists the fruits of their labour and of their frugality. Neither do we propose to do so. But capital is useless without labour, and

if capital belongs to the capitalists, labour belongs, by at least as sacred a right, to the labourers. We, the labourers, are at liberty to refuse to work except on such terms as we please. Now, by a system of co-operation among ourselves, we can do without capitalists. We could also, if we had fair play from laws and institutions, carry on productive operations with so much advantage, to our joint benefit, as to make it the interest of capitalists to leave their capital in our hands; because we could offer them a sufficient interest for its use; and because, once able to work for themselves, no labourers of any worth or efficiency would labour for a master, and capitalists would have no means of deriving an income from their capitals except by entrusting them to the associated work-people.

The system of co-operative production, thus established, would cut up by the root the present partial distribution of social advantages, and would enable the produce of industry to be shared on whatever principle, whether of equality or inequality (for on this point different schools of Socialists have different opinions), might appear to the various communities to be just and expedient. Such a plan would, in the opinion of Socialists, be so vast an improvement on the present order of society, that the government, which exists for the good of society, and especially for that of the suffering majority, ought to favour its introduction by every expedient in its power; ought, in particular, to raise funds by taxation, and contribute them in aid of the formation of industrial communities on the co-operative principle: which funds it is not doubted that the success of the scheme would enable, in a few years, to be paid back with interest.

This is Socialism; and it is not obvious what there is in this system of thought, to justify the frantic terror with which everything bearing that ominous name is usually received on both sides of the British Channel.

It really seems a perfectly just demand, in the present circumstances of France, that the government should aid with its funds, to a reasonable extent, in bringing into operation industrial communities on the Socialist principle. It ought to do so, even if it could be certain beforehand that the attempt would fail; because the operatives themselves cannot possibly be persuaded of this except by trial; because they will not be persuaded of it until everything possible has been done to make the trial successful; and because a national experiment of the kind, by the high moral qualities that would be elicited in the endeavour to make it succeed, and by the instruction that would radiate from its failure, would be an equivalent for the expenditure of many millions on any of the things which are commonly called popular education.

At all events, this view of the subject was the only one which could be practically taken by the Provisional Government. They had been made a government, chiefly by the working classes of Paris. A majority of the active members of those classes, including most of their leaders, were deeply imbued with Socialist principles and feelings; to them a republican revolution, which neither did nor attempted anything for Socialism, would have been a disappointment and a deception, which they would have resented with arms in their hands. The Provisional

Government, therefore, did what any government, situated as they were, must have done. They associated with themselves, in the supreme authority, two of the Socialist chiefs, M. Louis Blanc and M. Albert. And, things not being ripe for the adoption of practical measures of a Socialist character, they did the only thing which could be done—they opened an arena for the public discussion of the problem, and invited all competent persons, under the auspices of the government, to contribute their ideas and suggestions towards its solution.

This was the origin of the conferences at the Luxembourg; which, both in themselves, and in respect of the connexion of the Provisional Government with them, have been the subject of such boundless misrepresentation. The prominent feature of those conferences consisted of the Socialist speeches of M. Louis Blanc; of whom Lord Brougham asserts, that he has fled to England 'to avoid being judged by enlightened freemen, for endeavouring to make his Republic more bloody than it has been since 1794.' The accusation is as devoid of truth as his charge against the Montagne party in the Assembly, of 'panting for the guillotine as an instrument of government.' M. Louis Blanc is not even accused, officially, of being concerned in the insurrection of June; the prosecution against him having reference solely to the affair of May, in which, though the National Assembly was turbulently invaded, 'blood,' at all events, was neither shed nor thought of; and even as to this, his defence before the Commission d'Enquête appears conclusive. But with regard to his speeches at the Luxembourg, so far as these have been published

(and it has never been pretended that anything has been kept back which would make a contrary impression), nothing could be less inflammatory and provocative than his tone, nor more sober and reasonable than every suggestion which he propounded for immediate adoption. In fact, he proposed nothing more than that degree of aid by government to the experimental establishment of the co-operative system of industry, which, even if the failure were total, would be a cheap price for setting the question at rest. Far from stirring up the people to a Socialist insurrection, everything proves him to have felt that, of all things that could happen, an insurrection like that of June would be the most ruinous to the immediate prospects of his cause.

It was from no inherent tendency in the principles or teaching of the Socialist chiefs, that this insurrection broke out. It arose from the suddenness and unexpectedness of the Revolution of February, which, being effected mainly by Socialists, brought Socialist opinions into a position of apparent power, before the minds of the community generally were prepared for the situation, or had begun seriously to consider this great problem. Hence hopes were excited of an immediate practical realization, when nothing was yet ripe—when discussion and explanation had nearly all their work to do; and as soon as the first inevitable retrograde steps were taken, the frustration of premature hopes provoked a fatal collision.

If the Revolution of February should yet disappoint the glorious expectations which it raised, this collision will be the cause. It has divided the sincere Republicans, already a small minority, into two parties at

enmity with one another. It has alienated from the only Republican party which has any elements of stability, the greater part of the effective strength of the democracy; and it has filled the bourgeoisie with such insane terror at the bare thought of great social changes, that the most beneficent projects share the discredit of the most perilous, and they are ready to throw themselves into the arms of any government which will free them from the fear of a second Socialist insurrection. These things are lamentable; but the fatality of circumstances, more than the misconduct of individuals, is responsible for them.

If we are now asked whether we agree in the anticipations of the Socialists; whether we believe that their co-operative associations, at all events in the present state of education, would maintain their ground against individual competition, and secure an adequate amount of the fruits of industry, combined with a just repartition of them—our answer must be, that we do not. It is highly probable that, among a great number of such experiments, some would succeed, while under the influence of the zeal and enthusiasm of the first founders. And, in the face of the evidence which experience affords that mankind may be made capable of almost anything by a persevering application of the power of education in one direction, it would be too much to affirm that a time can never come when the scheme of Owen and of Louis Blanc, of a world governed by public spirit, without needing the vulgar incentives of individual interest, will possess a feasibility which cannot be accorded to it now.

But, in proportion to our distrust of the means

which Socialists propose for correcting the unjust inequalities in the lot of mankind, do we deem it incumbent on philosophers and politicians to use their utmost endeavours for bringing about the same end by an adaptation of the existing machinery of society. We hold with Bentham, that equality, though not the sole end, is one of the ends of good social arrangements; and that a system of institutions which does not make the scale turn in favour of equality, whenever this can be done without impairing the security of the property which is the product and reward of personal exertion, is essentially a bad government—a government for the few, to the injury of the many. And the admiration and sympathy which we feel for the glorious band who composed the Provisional Government, and for the party which supported them, is grounded, above all, on the fact that they stand openly identified with this principle, and have in all ways proved their sincere devotion to it. As an exemplification, we extract a few paragraphs from M. de Lamartine's 'History of the Girondists,' written before the February Revolution was thought of; paragraphs worthy of the noble conduct which has immortalized their illustrious writer, and to be taken as the creed of an earnest and rational Social Reformer, on the questions connected with property and the distribution of wealth:—

'An equal repartition of instruction, of faculties, and of the things given by nature, is evidently the legitimate tendency of the human mind. Founders of revealed religion, poets and sages, have eternally revolved this idea in their souls, and have held it up in their Paradise, in their dreams, or in their laws, as the ultimate prospect of humanity. It is,

then, an instinct of justice in the human mind. . . . Whatever tends to constitute inequalities of instruction, of rank, of condition, of fortune among mankind, is impious; whatever tends gradually to level these inequalities, which are often injustices, and to share more equitably the common heritage among mankind, is religious. All policy may be judged by this test, as a tree by its fruits. The ideal is but truth at a distance.

'But the sublimer an ideal, the more difficult it is to realize in institutions on the earth. The difficulty up to this time has been, to reconcile with equality of goods the inequalities of virtues, of faculties, and of exertions, which distinguish mankind from one another. Between the active and the inert, equality of goods is an injustice, for the one produces and the other merely consumes. In order that this community of goods may be just, we must suppose in all mankind the same conscience, the same application to labour, the same virtue. This supposition is chimerical. What social order can rest solidly upon such a falsehood? Of two things, one: society, everywhere present and everywhere infallible, must be able to compel every individual to the same labour and the same virtue; but then, what becomes of liberty? Society, on this footing, would be universal slavery. Or else, society must distribute daily with its own hands, to each according to his works, a share exactly proportioned to the labour and the services of each in the general association. But in that case, who is to be the judge?

'Imperfect human wisdom has found it easier, wiser, and more just to say to every one, 'Be thy own judge; take to thyself thy own recompense by thy riches or thy indigence.' Society has established property, has proclaimed the freedom of labour, and has legalized competition.

'But property, when established, does not feed those who possess nothing. But freedom of labour does not give the same means of labour to him who has only his hands, and to him who possesses millions of acres of the earth's surface. But competition is the code of egoism; a war to the death

between those who work and those who give work; those who sell, and those who buy; those who revel in abundance, and those who starve. Injustice on all hands! Incorrigible inequalities of nature and of law! The wisdom of the legislator seems to lie in palliating them one by one, generation by generation, law by law. He who seeks to correct everything by one stroke, shatters everything. Possibility is the necessary condition of poor human wisdom. Without pretending to resolve complicated iniquities by a single solution—to correct without intermission, to be always ameliorating, is the justice of imperfect beings like us. . . . Time seems to be one of the elements even of truth itself: to demand the ultimate truth from one moment of time, is to demand from the nature of things more than it can give. Impatience creates illusions and ruins instead of truths. Delusions are truths gathered before their time. The Christian and philosophic community of the good things of the earth, is the ultimate social truth; the delusions are the violences and the systems by which hitherto men have vainly imagined that they could establish this truth, and organize it into institutions.'

Although not necessary for the main purpose of the present article—the vindication of the Revolution of February and of its leading characters against systematic misjudgment and misrepresentation—it is not irrelevant to offer a few pages of comment on the advice tendered to France in Lord Brougham's pamphlet, respecting the formation of a Constitution.

This advice is prefaced by a very plain intimation that it is useless—grounded on the commonplace of essayists and reviewers, that a Constitution cannot be made. 'Laws are made; codes and constitutions grow. Those that grow have roots; they bear, they ripen, they endure. Those that are fashioned are like painted sticks planted in the ground, as I have seen

trees of liberty; they strike no root, bear no fruit, and swiftly decay.'

We have never been able to see in this trite dictum, anything more than a truism exaggerated into a paradox. Stripped of its metaphorical language, it amounts to this—that political institutions cannot work well, or subsist durably, unless they have existed as customs before they were enacted as laws. No one can be insensible to the advantage in point of security for stability, possessed by laws which merely annex positive sanctions to usages which the people had already adopted, before the legislature recognised them; such as our mercantile law, grounded on the customs of merchants, to which the courts of justice gradually gave legal validity. But this, so far as it is true at all, is as true of any other laws as of political institutions, and as true of a single law as of a code. Why then confine it to codes and Constitutions? Of codes and Constitutions, no more than of single laws, is this pre-existence as custom, however advantageous to stability, a necessary condition of it. What is necessary is, that they should not violently shock the pre-existing habits and sentiments of the people; and that they should not demand and presuppose qualities in the popular mind, and a degree of interest in, and attachment to, the institutions themselves, which the character of the people, and their state of civilization, render unlikely to be really found in them. These two are the rocks on which those usually split, who by means of a temporary ascendancy establish institutions alien from, or too much in advance of, the condition of the public mind. The founders of the English Commonwealth failed for the first reason. Their re-

publicanism offended the taste for kingship and old institutions, their religious freedom and equality shocked the attachment to prelacy or presbyterianism, which then were pervading principles in the majority of the nation. Charlemagne's attempt to construct a centralized monarchy amidst the distraction and anarchy of the eighth century, failed for the other of the two reasons specified. Its success would have required, both in the governors and the governed, a more cultivated intelligence, a greater comprehension of large views and extended interests, than existed or was attainable in that age, save by eminently exceptional individuals like Charlemagne himself. If the establishment of republicanism in France should turn out to be premature, it will be for the latter reason. Although no popular sentiment is shocked by it, the event may prove that there is no sufficient attachment to it, or desire to promote its success; but a readiness to sacrifice it to any trivial convenience, personal *engouement*, or dream of increased security.

Lord Brougham cannot enter on the subject of the French Constitution, without rebuking the Assembly for the indifference they have shown to this their appointed work.

'They seem only able to consider, with any interest, personal questions, or party questions; or (if they deviate into more general views) social questions, as the language of the day terms them. Such are the only discussions in which the National Assembly appears to have taken a deep interest. With the work of framing a Constitution they have as yet troubled themselves but little, although their sittings have lasted well nigh six months, at the cost to the people of a pound a-day to each of the 900 members.'

These sentences were of course written before the public discussions on the Constitution had commenced; but that does not excuse omission to take notice of the fact, that the work of framing the Constitution was going on uninterruptedly, and with still greater activity, in the five months which preceded, than in the two which were occupied by, those public discussions. One of the earliest acts of the Assembly was the nomination of a Committee of thirty of its ablest members, to frame the draft of a Constitution. The draft, when framed, was the subject of minute examination and discussion, with closed doors—but of which reports reached the newspapers—in every one of the fifteen *bureaux* of the Assembly; after which the *bureaux* elected another Committee, to be associated with the first Committee in revising the original scheme, and framing a second draft, with the lights derived from the discussion; so that when the day arrived for taking this second draft publicly into consideration, the work of framing the Constitution was, in reality, finished. It had received the benefit of the best light, of the best wisdom of the Assembly; it was well known how the votes of the Assembly would go, on all disputable points of considerable moment; and little remained for the public discussion to do, except to send forth the arguments of the majority, and the objections and protests of the minority, to their constituents and to the world. Is not this the way in which a Constitution should be made? Are not all Constitutions, and all laws of any value, the work of a few select minds in the first instance, then discussed and canvassed with a greater number, and finally ratified by the many?

The Constitution thus made, and now solemnly proclaimed and adopted, is such as the ideas and the degree of instruction of the age and nation permitted it to be. Of all charges, that to which it is the least obnoxious is the trivial one of introducing new 'theoretical' principles. There is in it a remarkable absence of what, in Lord Brougham's eyes, is so great a fault in a political Constitution—original ideas. There is not a principle or a provision in it that is not familiar to the public mind. It is, in fact, a digest of the elementary doctrines of representative democracy. To those who disapprove of democracy, it is, of course, unacceptable: but, that being granted as the indispensable datum, from which the framers of the Constitution were not at liberty to depart—any fault which can be found with their work, on the ground of a deficiency of checks to the preponderance of popular will, must be set down to the account not of new theories, but of the want of them. The presence of such checks, not their absence, would have been the novelty in constitution-making. That would really have been the introduction of a principle new in democratic constitutions, and for which no foundation was laid in the national mind.

Lord Brougham has condescended to bestow upon these unapt scholars, his view of some of the essential requisites of a popular Constitution. First among these, is the ancient device, or rather accident, of two Legislative Chambers. How unsuited this contrivance would be to the state of the French mind, may be known from the fact, that although supported by some of the most individually influential of French orators and politicians, it has been rejected by a

larger majority than any of the other conservative amendments that have been proposed; and has numbered among its opponents the greater part of that large party in the Assembly which calls itself Moderate, and is called by others Anti-republican.

The arguments for a second Chamber, when looked at from one point of view, are of great force; being no other than the irresistible arguments for the necessity or expediency of a principle of antagonism in society—of a counterpoise somewhere to the preponderant power in the State. It seems hardly possible that there should be permanently good government, or enlightened progress, without such a counterpoise. It may, however, be maintained, with considerable appearance of reason, that the antagonism may be more beneficially placed in society itself, than in the legislative organ which gives effect to the will of society; that it should have its place in the powers which form public opinion, rather than in that whose proper function is to execute it; that, for example, in a democratic State, the desired counterbalance to the impulses and will of the comparatively uninstructed many, lies in a strong and independent organization of the class whose special business is the cultivation of knowledge; and will better embody itself in Universities, than in Senates or Houses of Lords.

A second Chamber, howsoever composed, is a serious hindrance to improvement. Suppose it constituted in the manner, of all others, least calculated to render it an obstructive body; suppose that an Assembly of (say) 600 persons, is elected by universal suffrage, and when elected divides itself, as under the French Directorial Constitution, into two bodies, say of 300

each. Now, whereas if the whole body sat as one Chamber, the opposition of 300 persons, or one-half of the representatives of the people, would be required to throw out an improvement; on the system of separate deliberation, 150, or one-fourth only, would suffice. Without doubt, the division into two sections, which would be a hindrance to useful changes, would be a hindrance also to hurtful ones; and the arrangement therefore must be regarded as beneficial, by those who think that a democratic Assembly is more likely to make hurtful than useful changes. But this opinion, both historical and daily experience contradicts. There cannot be a case more in point than this very instance of France. The National Assembly was chosen in the crisis of a revolution, by a suffrage including all the labouring men of the community; the doctrines of a subversive character which were afloat, were peculiarly favourable to the apparent interests of labouring men; yet the Assembly elected was essentially a conservative body; and it is the general opinion that the legislature now about to be elected will be still more so. The great majority of mankind are, as a general rule, tenacious of things existing: habit and custom predominate with them, in almost all cases, over remote prospects of advantage; and however popular may be the constitution, in the ordinary course of its working the difficulty is not to prevent considerable changes, but to accomplish them even when most essentially needful. Any systematic provision in the Constitution to render changes difficult, is therefore worse than superfluous—it is injurious.

It is true, that in the times which accompany or

immediately follow a revolution, this tendency of the human mind may be temporarily and partially reversed; partially, we say—for a people are as tenacious of old customs and ways of thinking in the crisis of a revolution as at any other time, on all points except those on which they have become strongly excited by a perception of evils or grievances; those, in fact, on which the revolution itself turns. On such points, indeed, there may easily arise, at those periods, an ardour of ill-considered change; and it is at such times, if ever, that the check afforded by a second or conservative Chamber might be beneficial. But these are the times when the resistance of such a body is practically null. The very arguments used by the supporters of the institution, to make it endurable, assume that it cannot prolong its resistance in excited times. A second Chamber which, during a revolution, should resolutely oppose itself to the branch of the legislature more directly representing the excited state of popular feeling, would be infallibly swept away. It is the destiny of a second Chamber to become inoperative in the only cases, in which its effective operation might have a chance of producing less harm than good.

If these observations are correct (and we give them only for what they are worth), there is no reason to regret the decision by which the Constituent Assembly of the French Republic has rejected the principle of a double legislature. The same considerations serve to justify their adoption of what is termed universal suffrage. Lord Brougham himself admits that the operation of universal suffrage has hitherto proved very different from what its enemies

had anticipated. If a suffrage extending to every adult male of the community produces, and is likely to produce, a legislature more justly chargeable with too conservative than with too innovative a spirit, what would it have been if, by a taxpaying or other property qualification, the democracy of Paris, Lyons, and other large towns, had been excluded from its share of influence? Lord Brougham repeats, along with other trite and gone-by observations on the social condition of France, that very commonplace one, that Paris is France. It is true that, from the political passiveness of the majority of the French people, and the habit of looking to the government as the sole arbiter of all political interests, the provinces of France usually submit readily to any existing government; but it is not now true, whatever it may have been formerly, that the provinces follow blindly the *opinion* of Paris; they might more truly be said to be unreasonably jealous of Parisian influences. Paris, with a few of the larger towns, is almost the sole element of progress which exists, politically speaking, in France; instead of having too much power, it has far less than in proportion to its immense superiority in political education and intelligence. Its power is never preponderant but when its insurrectionary element is brought into play; and this received a blow in June last, which has laid it prostrate for some time at least.

The remainder of Lord Brougham's advice to the French people on constitutional subjects is, that they should have an efficient executive, with power promptly to suppress any attempt at disturbance—a point in which, in the present temper of the French,

they are not likely to be found deficient; and lastly, that the legislature should be nothing but a legislature, and should not, by itself attempting to administer, usurp the functions of the executive. On this last topic, Lord Brougham's observations, as far as they go, are just, and to the point.

'The legislative body,' he observes, 'should be strictly confined to its proper functions, of making the laws, and superintending the administration both of the executive and of all other departments; but excluded from all share in any of those branches. The office of discussing legislative measures or of controlling the conduct of public functionaries, may well be entrusted to a senate, however constituted, as the imposition of public burthens upon the community may not only with equal safety be placed in its hands, but ought almost exclusively to rest there. A representative body, necessarily numerous, because elected by a great people, can well and safely debate such matters; it is peculiarly fitted for their discussion. Such a body is wholly unfit to handle matters merely of an administrative kind, or of a judicial. Its numbers at once pronounce this disqualification: its responsibility to constituents confirms the sentence: its want of individual responsibility precludes all appeal and all doubt. How can an assembly of six or seven hundred persons conduct foreign negotiations, decide questions of peace and war, or dispose of the national force, whether with a view to internal police or foreign operations, offensive or defensive? How can such a body be entrusted with the appointment to places, civil or military, when each man will be quick to help his fellow-member's job, and none ever feel afraid of constituents who can know little, and care less, about such nominations? Above everything, the judicial office must never be exercised by an assembly like this; and of all appointments from which it should be shut out, those connected with judicial powers fall most certainly under the rule of exclusion.'

The principle here contended for is of so much im-

portance, that it deserves to be carried farther than is done in this passage, or by any existing school of politicians. In general, if a public function is to be discharged with honesty and skill, some one person, or a very small number, should, if possible, be specifically entrusted with it. A few persons, and still more, one person, will feel a moral responsibility, an amenability to the bar of public opinion, which, even when they cannot be made more directly responsible, will be a far stronger security for fidelity and attention to their trust than can be provided in the case of a numerous body. We dissent altogether from the common opinion of democratic republicans, which tends to multiply the conferring of offices by popular election. The sovereign Assembly, which is the organ of the people for superintending and controlling the government, must of necessity be so elected. But with this exception, it appears to us certain (what even Bentham, though in his earlier speculations he maintained a different opinion, ultimately acknowledged), that judges, administrators, functionaries of all sorts, will be selected with a much more careful eye to their qualifications, if some conspicuous public officer, a President or a minister, has the choice of them imposed on him as part of his peculiar business, and feels his official character and the tenure of his own power to depend, not on what the people may now think of the choice made, but on what they will think of it after trial. It seems equally certain that the President, or prime minister, will be better selected by the people's representatives, than by the people themselves directly. The example of the United States is a strong argument for this opinion. If the

President were elected by Congress, he would generally be the leader, and acknowledged ablest man, of his party: elected by the people, he is now always either an unknown mediocrity, or a man whose reputation has been acquired in some other field than that of politics. Nor is this likely to alter; for every politician who has attained eminence has made a multitude of, at least political, enemies, which renders him a less available candidate for his party to put forward, than somebody of the same professed principles who is comparatively obscure. It is to be feared that the appointment of a President by the direct suffrages of the community, will prove to be the most serious mistake which the framers of the French Constitution have made. They have introduced by it into the still more fermentable elements of French society, what even in America is felt to be so great an evil—the turmoil of a perpetual canvass, and the baneful habit of making the decision of all great public questions depend less upon their merits, than upon their probable influence on the next presidential election. And, in addition to this, it will probably be found, if their present institutions last, that they have subjected themselves to a series of much worse selections, and will have their Republic presided over by a less able and less creditable succession of men, than if the chief magistrate had been chosen by the legislature.

It is but just to acknowledge, that this very questionable provision was introduced in obedience to the important principle of preventing the legislature from encroaching on the province of the executive. The object was, to make the President independent of the

legislature. It was feared that if he were appointed and could be turned out by them, he would be their mere clerk—would exercise no judgment and assume no responsibility of his own, but simply register the decrees of a body unfit to conduct the business of government in detail. There was, however, a means of avoiding this, which would have been perfectly effectual. They might have given to the chief of the executive the power of dissolving the legislature, and appealing afresh to the people. With this safeguard, they might have left to the Assembly the uncontrolled choice of the head of the executive, and the power, by a vote of dismissal, of reducing him to the alternative of either retiring or dissolving the Chamber. The check which, under this arrangement, the legislature and the executive would exercise reciprocally over one another, and the reluctance which each would feel to proceed to an extremity which might end in their own downfall instead of their rival's, would in ordinary cases be sufficient to restrain each within the constitutional limits of its own authority. Instead of this, it is to be feared that by placing face to face an Assembly and a first magistrate—each emanating directly from popular suffrage, and each elected for a term fixed, only capable of being abridged by death or resignation—the Assembly have organized a perpetual hostility between the two powers, replete with dangers to the stability of the Constitution. For if the President and the National Assembly should hereafter quarrel, there may for three whole years be no means by which either can relieve itself from the hostility of the other, except a *coup d'état.*

In addition to these considerations, an executive

chosen by a select body, and armed with the power of dissolving the legislature, would probably be a more effectual check than any second Chamber upon the conduct of an Assembly engaged in a course of hasty or unjust legislation. An eminent politician, the leader of a great party, and surrounded by the *élite* of that party as his ministers and advisers, would have more at stake in the good conduct of public affairs, would be more practised and skilful in judging of exigencies, would apply himself to his task with a much deeper sense of permanent responsibility, and, as a consequence of all this, would be likely to carry with him a greater weight of opinion, than an assembly of two or three hundred persons, whether composed of English lords, or of the elective representatives of French or American democracy.

To correct misstatements is so much more tedious a process than to commit them, that space fails us for pointing out, or even alluding to, a tenth part of those which compose the main bulk of Lord Brougham's pamphlet. But we have exhibited a sample, and what we have exhibited is a fair specimen of what remains behind. Let us hope that something has been done towards the more important purpose of vindicating the Revolution, and the Provisional Government, from as unjust aspersions as ever clouded the reputation of great actions and eminent characters.

ENFRANCHISEMENT OF WOMEN.*

ALL the more recent of these papers were joint productions of myself and of one whose loss, even in a merely intellectual point of view, can never be repaired or alleviated. But the following Essay is hers in a peculiar sense, my share in it being little more than that of an editor and amanuensis. Its authorship having been known at the time, and publicly attributed to her, it is proper to state, that she never regarded it as a complete discussion of the subject which it treats of: and, highly as I estimate it, I would rather it remained unacknowledged, than that it should be read with the idea that even the faintest image can be found in it of a mind and heart which in their union of the rarest, and what are deemed the most conflicting excellencies, were unparalleled in any human being that I have known or read of. While she was the light, life, and grace of every society in which she took part, the foundation of her character was a deep seriousness, resulting from the combination of the strongest and most sensitive feelings with the highest principles. All that excites admiration when found separately in others, seemed brought together in her: a conscience at once healthy and tender; a generosity, bounded only by a sense of justice which often forgot its own claims, but never those of others; a heart so large and loving, that whoever was capable of making the smallest return of sympathy, always received tenfold; and in the intellectual department, a vigour and truth of imagination, a delicacy of perception, an accuracy and nicety of observation, only equalled by her profundity of speculative thought, and by a practical judgment and discernment next to infallible. So elevated was the general level of her faculties, that the highest poetry, philosophy, oratory, or art, seemed trivial by the side

* *Westminster Review*, July 1851.

of her, and equal only to expressing some small part of her mind. And there is no one of those modes of manifestation in which she could not easily have taken the highest rank, had not her inclination led her for the most part to content herself with being the inspirer, prompter, and unavowed coadjutor of others.

The present paper was written to promote a cause which she had deeply at heart, and though appealing only to the severest reason, was meant for the general reader. The question, in her opinion, was in a stage in which no treatment but the most calmly argumentative could be useful, while many of the strongest arguments were necessarily omitted, as being unsuited for popular effect. Had she lived to write out all her thoughts on this great question, she would have produced something as far transcending in profundity the present Essay, as, had she not placed a rigid restraint on her feelings, she would have excelled it in fervid eloquence. Yet nothing which even she could have written on any single subject, would have given an adequate idea of the depth and compass of her mind. As during life she continually detected, before any one else had seemed to perceive them, those changes of times and circumstances which ten or twelve years later became subjects of general remark, so I venture to prophecy that if mankind continue to improve, their spiritual history for ages to come will be the progressive working out of her thoughts, and realization of her conceptions.

MOST of our readers will probably learn from these pages for the first time, that there has arisen in the United States, and in the most civilized and enlightened portion of them, an organized agitation on a new question—new, not to thinkers, nor to any one by whom the principles of free and popular government are felt as well as acknowledged, but new, and even unheard-of, as a subject for public meetings and practical political action. This question

is, the enfranchisement of women; their admission, in law and in fact, to equality in all rights, political, civil, and social, with the male citizens of the community.

It will add to the surprise with which many will receive this intelligence, that the agitation which has commenced is not a pleading by male writers and orators *for* women, those who are professedly to be benefited remaining either indifferent or ostensibly hostile. It is a political movement, practical in its objects, carried on in a form which denotes an intention to persevere. And it is a movement not merely *for* women, but *by* them. Its first public manifestation appears to have been a Convention of Women, held in the State of Ohio, in the spring of 1850. Of this meeting we have seen no report. On the 23rd and 24th of October last, a succession of public meetings was held at Worcester, in Massachusetts, under the name of a 'Women's Rights Convention,' of which the president was a woman, and nearly all the chief speakers women: numerously reinforced, however, by men, among whom were some of the most distinguished leaders in the kindred cause of negro emancipation. A general and four special committees were nominated, for the purpose of carrying on the undertaking until the next annual meeting.

According to the report in the New York Tribune, above a thousand persons were present throughout, and 'if a larger place could have been had, many thousands more would have attended.' The place was described as 'crowded from the beginning with attentive and interested listeners.' In regard to the

quality of the speaking, the proceedings bear an advantageous comparison with those of any popular movement with which we are acquainted, either in this country or in America. Very rarely in the oratory of public meetings is the part of verbiage and declamation so small, that of calm good sense and reason so considerable. The result of the Convention was in every respect encouraging to those by whom it was summoned: and it is probably destined to inaugurate one of the most important of the movements towards political and social reform, which are the best characteristic of the present age.

That the promoters of this new agitation take their stand on principles, and do not fear to declare these in their widest extent, without time-serving or compromise, will be seen from the resolutions adopted by the Convention, part of which we transcribe.

'*Resolved*—That every human being, of full age, and resident for a proper length of time on the soil of the nation, who is required to obey the law, is entitled to a voice in its enactment; that every such person, whose property or labour is taxed for the support of the government, is entitled to a direct share in such government; therefore,

'*Resolved*—That women are entitled to the right of suffrage, and to be considered eligible to office, ... and that every party which claims to represent the humanity, the civilization, and the progress of the age, is bound to inscribe on its banners equality before the law, without distinction of sex or colour.

'*Resolved*—That civil and political rights acknowledge no sex, and therefore the word 'male' should be struck from every State Constitution.

'*Resolved*—That, since the prospect of honourable and useful employment in after-life is the best stimulus to the use of educational advantages, and since the best education is that

we give ourselves, in the struggles, employments, and discipline of life; therefore it is impossible that women should make full use of the instruction already accorded to them, or that their career should do justice to their faculties, until the avenues to the various civil and professional employments are thrown open to them.

'*Resolved*—That every effort to educate women, without according to them their rights, and arousing their conscience by the weight of their responsibilities, is futile, and a waste of labour.

'*Resolved*—That the laws of property, as affecting married persons, demand a thorough revisal, so that all rights be equal between them; that the wife have, during life, an equal control over the property gained by their mutual toil and sacrifices, and be heir to her husband precisely to that extent that he is heir to her, and entitled at her death to dispose by will of the same share of the joint property as he is.'

The following is a brief summary of the principal demands.

'1. *Education* in primary and high schools, universities, medical, legal, and theological institutions.

'2. *Partnership* in the labours and gains, risks and remunerations, of productive industry.

'3. *A coequal share* in the formation and administration of laws—municipal, state, and national—through legislative assemblies, courts, and executive offices.'

It would be difficult to put so much true, just, and reasonable meaning into a style so little calculated to recommend it as that of some of the resolutions. But whatever objection may be made to some of the expressions, none, in our opinion, can be made to the demands themselves. As a question of justice, the case seems to us too clear for dispute. As one of

expediency, the more thoroughly it is examined the stronger it will appear.

That women have as good a claim as men have, in point of personal right, to the suffrage, or to a place in the jury-box, it would be difficult for any one to deny. It cannot certainly be denied by the United States of America, as a people or as a community. Their democratic institutions rest avowedly on the inherent right of every one to a voice in the government. Their Declaration of Independence, framed by the men who are still their great constitutional authorities—that document which has been from the first, and is now, the acknowledged basis of their polity, commences with this express statement:—

> 'We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed.'

We do not imagine that any American democrat will evade the force of these expressions by the dishonest or ignorant subterfuge, that 'men,' in this memorable document, does not stand for human beings, but for one sex only; that 'life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness' are 'inalienable rights' of only one moiety of the human species; and that 'the governed,' whose consent is affirmed to be the only source of just power, are meant for that half of mankind only, who, in relation to the other, have hitherto assumed the character of *governors*. The contradiction between principle and practice cannot be explained away. A like dereliction of the funda-

mental maxims of their political creed has been committed by the Americans in the flagrant instance of the negroes; of this they are learning to recognise the turpitude. After a struggle which, by many of its incidents, deserves the name of heroic, the abolitionists are now so strong in numbers and in influence that they hold the balance of parties in the United States. It was fitting that the men whose names will remain associated with the extirpation, from the democratic soil of America, of the aristocracy of colour, should be among the originators, for America and for the rest of the world, of the first collective protest against the aristocracy of sex; a distinction as accidental as that of colour, and fully as irrelevant to all questions of government.

Not only to the democracy of America, the claim of women to civil and political equality makes an irresistible appeal, but also to those Radicals and Chartists in the British islands, and democrats on the Continent, who claim what is called universal suffrage as an inherent right, unjustly and oppressively withheld from them. For with what truth or rationality could the suffrage be termed universal, while half the human species remain excluded from it? To declare that a voice in the government is the right of all, and demand it only for a part—the part, namely, to which the claimant himself belongs—is to renounce even the appearance of principle. The Chartist who denies the suffrage to women, is a Chartist only because he is not a lord: he is one of those levellers who would level only down to themselves.

Even those who do not look upon a voice in the

government as a matter of personal right, nor profess principles which require that it should be extended to all, have usually traditional maxims of political justice with which it is impossible to reconcile the exclusion of all women from the common rights of citizenship. It is an axiom of English freedom that taxation and representation should be coextensive. Even under the laws which give the wife's property to the husband, there are many unmarried women who pay taxes. It is one of the fundamental doctrines of the British Constitution, that all persons should be tried by their peers: yet women, whenever tried, are tried by male judges and a male jury. To foreigners the law accords the privilege of claiming that half the jury should be composed of themselves; not so to women. Apart from maxims of detail, which represent local and national rather than universal ideas; it is an acknowledged dictate of justice to make no degrading distinctions without necessity. In all things the presumption ought to be on the side of equality. A reason must be given why anything should be permitted to one person and interdicted to another. But when that which is interdicted includes nearly everything which those to whom it is permitted most prize, and to be deprived of which they feel to be most insulting; when not only political liberty but personal freedom of action is the prerogative of a caste; when even in the exercise of industry, almost all employments which task the higher faculties in an important field, which lead to distinction, riches, or even pecuniary independence, are fenced round as the exclusive domain of the predominant section, scarcely any

doors being left open to the dependent class, except such as all who can enter elsewhere disdainfully pass by; the miserable expediencies which are advanced as excuses for so grossly partial a dispensation, would not be sufficient, even if they were real, to render it other than a flagrant injustice. While, far from being expedient, we are firmly convinced that the division of mankind into two castes, one born to rule over the other, is in this case, as in all cases, an unqualified mischief; a source of perversion and demoralization, both to the favoured class and to those at whose expense they are favoured; producing none of the good which it is the custom to ascribe to it, and forming a bar, almost insuperable while it lasts, to any really vital improvement, either in the character or in the social condition of the human race.

These propositions it is now our purpose to maintain. But before entering on them, we would endeavour to dispel the preliminary objections which, in the minds of persons to whom the subject is new, are apt to prevent a real and conscientious examination of it. The chief of these obstacles is that most formidable one, custom. Women never have had equal rights with men. The claim in their behalf, of the common rights of mankind, is looked upon as barred by universal practice. This strongest of prejudices, the prejudice against what is new and unknown, has, indeed, in an age of changes like the present, lost much of its force; if it had not, there would be little hope of prevailing against it. Over three-fourths of the habitable world, even at this day, the answer, 'it has always been so,' closes all discussion. But it is

the boast of modern Europeans, and of their American kindred, that they know and do many things which their forefathers neither knew nor did; and it is perhaps the most unquestionable point of superiority in the present above former ages, that habit is not now the tyrant it formerly was over opinions and modes of action, and that the worship of custom is a declining idolatry. An uncustomary thought, on a subject which touches the greater interests of life, still startles when first presented; but if it can be kept before the mind until the impression of strangeness wears off, it obtains a hearing, and as rational a consideration as the intellect of the hearer is accustomed to bestow on any other subject.

In the present case, the prejudice of custom is doubtless on the unjust side. Great thinkers, indeed, at different times, from Plato to Condorcet, besides some of the most eminent names of the present age, have made emphatic protests in favour of the equality of women. And there have been voluntary societies, religious or secular, of which the Society of Friends is the most known, by whom that principle was recognised. But there has been no political community or nation in which, by law and usage, women have not been in a state of political and civil inferiority. In the ancient world the same fact was alleged, with equal truth, in behalf of slavery. It might have been alleged in favour of the mitigated form of slavery, serfdom, all through the middle ages. It was urged against freedom of industry, freedom of conscience, freedom of the press; none of these liberties were thought compatible with a well-ordered state, until they had proved their possibility by actually existing

as facts. That an institution or a practice is customary is no presumption of its goodness, when any other sufficient cause can be assigned for its existence. There is no difficulty in understanding why the subjection of women has been a custom. No other explanation is needed than physical force.

That those who were physically weaker should have been made legally inferior, is quite conformable to the mode in which the world has been governed. Until very lately, the rule of physical strength was the general law of human affairs. Throughout history, the nations, races, classes, which found themselves the strongest, either in muscles, in riches, or in military discipline, have conquered and held in subjection the rest. If, even in the most improved nations, the law of the sword is at last discountenanced as unworthy, it is only since the calumniated eighteenth century. Wars of conquest have only ceased since democratic revolutions began. The world is very young, and has but just begun to cast off injustice. It is only now getting rid of negro slavery. It is only now getting rid of monarchical despotism. It is only now getting rid of hereditary feudal nobility. It is only now getting rid of disabilities on the ground of religion. It is only beginning to treat any *men* as citizens, except the rich and a favoured portion of the middle class. Can we wonder that it has not yet done as much for women? As society was constituted until the last few generations, inequality was its very basis; association grounded on equal rights scarcely existed; to be equals was to be enemies; two persons could hardly co-operate in anything, or meet in any amicable relation, without the law's ap-

pointing that one of them should be the superior of the other. Mankind have outgrown this state, and all things now tend to substitute, as the general principle of human relations, a just equality, instead of the dominion of the strongest. But of all relations, that between men and women being the nearest and most intimate, and connected with the greatest number of strong emotions, was sure to be the last to throw off the old rule and receive the new: for in proportion to the strength of a feeling, is the tenacity with which it clings to the forms and circumstances with which it has even accidentally become associated.

When a prejudice, which has any hold on the feelings, finds itself reduced to the unpleasant necessity of assigning reasons, it thinks it has done enough when it has re-asserted the very point in dispute, in phrases which appeal to the pre-existing feeling. Thus, many persons think they have sufficiently justified the restrictions on women's field of action, when they have said that the pursuits from which women are excluded are *unfeminine*, and that the *proper sphere* of women is not politics or publicity, but private and domestic life.

We deny the right of any portion of the species to decide for another portion, or any individual for another individual, what is and what is not their 'proper sphere.' The proper sphere for all human beings is the largest and highest which they are able to attain to. What this is, cannot be ascertained, without complete liberty of choice. The speakers at the Convention in America have therefore done wisely and right, in refusing to entertain the question of the

peculiar aptitudes either of women or of men, or the limits within which this or that occupation may be supposed to be more adapted to the one or to the other. They justly maintain, that these questions can only be satisfactorily answered by perfect freedom. Let every occupation be open to all, without favour or discouragement to any, and employments will fall into the hands of those men or women who are found by experience to be most capable of worthily exercising them. There need be no fear that women will take out of the hands of men any occupation which men perform better than they. Each individual will prove his or her capacities, in the only way in which capacities can be proved—by trial; and the world will have the benefit of the best faculties of all its inhabitants. But to interfere beforehand by an arbitrary limit, and declare that whatever be the genius, talent, energy, or force of mind of an individual of a certain sex or class, those faculties shall not be exerted, or shall be exerted only in some few of the many modes in which others are permitted to use theirs, is not only an injustice to the individual, and a detriment to society, which loses what it can ill spare, but is also the most effectual mode of providing that, in the sex or class so fettered, the qualities which are not permitted to be exercised shall not exist.

We shall follow the very proper example of the Convention, in not entering into the question of the alleged differences in physical or mental qualities between the sexes; not because we have nothing to say, but because we have too much; to discuss this one point tolerably would need all the space we have

to bestow on the entire subject.* But if those who assert that the 'proper sphere' for women is the domestic, mean by this that they have not shown themselves qualified for any other, the assertion evinces great ignorance of life and of history. Women have shown fitness for the highest social functions, exactly in proportion as they have been admitted to them. By a curious anomaly, though ineligible to even the lowest offices of State, they are in some countries admitted to the highest of all, the regal; and if there is any one function for which they have shown a decided vocation, it is that of reigning. Not to go back to ancient history, we look in vain for abler or firmer rulers than Elizabeth; than Isabella of Castile; than Maria Teresa; than Catherine of Russia; than Blanche, mother of Louis IX. of France; than Jeanne d'Albret, mother of Henri Quatre. There are few kings on record who contended with more difficult circumstances, or over-

* An excellent passage on this part of the subject, from one of Sydney Smith's contributions to the Edinburgh Review, we will not refrain from quoting:—'A great deal has been said of the original difference of capacity between men and women, as if women were more quick and men more judicious—as if women were more remarkable for delicacy of association, and men for stronger powers of attention. All this, we confess, appears to us very fanciful. That there is a difference in the understandings of the men and the women we every day meet with, everybody, we suppose, must perceive; but there is none surely which may not be accounted for by the difference of circumstances in which they have been placed, without referring to any conjectural difference of original conformation of mind. As long as boys and girls run about in the dirt, and trundle hoops together, they are both precisely alike. If you catch up one-half of these creatures, and train them to a particular set of actions and opinions, and the other half to a perfectly opposite set, of course their understandings will differ, as one or the other sort of occupations has called this or that talent into action. There is surely no occasion to go into any deeper or more abstruse reasoning, in order to explain so very simple a phenomenon.'—*Sydney Smith's Works*, vol. i. p. 200.

came them more triumphantly, than these. Even in semi-barbarous Asia, princesses who have never been seen by men, other than those of their own family, or ever spoken with them unless from behind a curtain, have as regents, during the minority of their sons, exhibited many of the most brilliant examples of just and vigorous administration. In the middle ages, when the distance between the upper and lower ranks was greater than even between women and men, and the women of the privileged class, however subject to tyranny from the men of the same class, were at a less distance below them than any one else was, and often in their absence represented them in their functions and authority—numbers of heroic châtelaines, like Jeanne de Montfort, or the great Countess of Derby as late even as the time of Charles I., distinguished themselves not only by their political but their military capacity. In the centuries immediately before and after the Reformation, ladies of royal houses, as diplomatists, as governors of provinces, or as the confidential advisers of kings, equalled the first statesmen of their time: and the treaty of Cambray, which gave peace to Europe, was negotiated in conferences where no other person was present, by the aunt of the Emperor Charles the Fifth, and the mother of Francis the First.

Concerning the fitness, then, of women for politics, there can be no question: but the dispute is more likely to turn upon the fitness of politics for women. When the reasons alleged for excluding women from active life in all its higher departments are stripped of their garb of declamatory phrases, and reduced to the simple expression of a meaning, they seem to be

mainly three: first, the incompatibility of active life with maternity, and with the cares of a household; secondly, its alleged hardening effect on the character; and thirdly, the inexpediency of making an addition to the already excessive pressure of competition in every kind of professional or lucrative employment.

The first, the maternity argument, is usually laid most stress upon: although (it needs hardly be said) this reason, if it be one, can apply only to mothers. It is neither necessary nor just to make imperative on women that they shall be either mothers or nothing; or that if they have been mothers once, they shall be nothing else during the whole remainder of their lives. Neither women nor men need any law to exclude them from an occupation, if they have undertaken another which is incompatible with it. No one proposes to exclude the male sex from Parliament because a man may be a soldier or sailor in active service, or a merchant whose business requires all his time and energies. Nine-tenths of the occupations of men exclude them *de facto* from public life, as effectually as if they were excluded by law; but that is no reason for making laws to exclude even the nine-tenths, much less the remaining tenth. The reason of the case is the same for women as for men. There is no need to make provision by law that a woman shall not carry on the active details of a household, or of the education of children, and at the same time practise a profession or be elected to parliament. Where incompatibility is real, it will take care of itself: but there is gross injustice in making the incompatibility a pretence for the exclusion of those in whose case it does not exist. And these, if they were

free to choose, would be a very large proportion. The maternity argument deserts its supporters in the case of single women, a large and increasing class of the population; a fact which, it is not irrelevant to remark, by tending to diminish the excessive competition of numbers, is calculated to assist greatly the prosperity of all. There is no inherent reason or necessity that all women should voluntarily choose to devote their lives to one animal function and its consequences. Numbers of women are wives and mothers only because there is no other career open to them, no other occupation for their feelings or their activities. Every improvement in their education, and enlargement of their faculties, everything which renders them more qualified for any other mode of life, increases the number of those to whom it is an injury and an oppression to be denied the choice. To say that women must be excluded from active life because maternity disqualifies them for it, is in fact to say, that every other career should be forbidden them in order that maternity may be their only resource.

But secondly, it is urged, that to give the same freedom of occupation to women as to men, would be an injurious addition to the crowd of competitors, by whom the avenues to almost all kinds of employment are choked up, and its remuneration depressed. This argument, it is to be observed, does not reach the political question. It gives no excuse for withholding from women the rights of citizenship. The suffrage, the jury-box, admission to the legislature and to office, it does not touch. It bears only on the industrial branch of the subject. Allowing it, then, in an economical point of view, its full force; assuming

that to lay open to women the employments now monopolized by men, would tend, like the breaking down of other monopolies, to lower the rate of remuneration in those employments; let us consider what is the amount of this evil consequence, and what the compensation for it. The worst ever asserted, much worse than is at all likely to be realized, is that if women competed with men, a man and a woman could not together earn more than is now earned by the man alone. Let us make this supposition, the most unfavourable supposition possible: the joint income of the two would be the same as before, while the woman would be raised from the position of a servant to that of a partner. Even if every woman, as matters now stand, had a claim on some man for support, how infinitely preferable is it that part of the income should be of the woman's earning, even if the aggregate sum were but little increased by it, rather than that she should be compelled to stand aside in order that men may be the sole earners, and the sole dispensers of what is earned. Even under the present laws respecting the property of women, a woman who contributes materially to the support of the family, cannot be treated in the same contemptuously tyrannical manner as one who, however she may toil as a domestic drudge, is a dependent on the man for subsistence.* As for the depression of wages by increase

* The truly horrible effects of the present state of the law among the lowest of the working population, is exhibited in those cases of hideous maltreatment of their wives by working men, with which every newspaper, every police report, teems. Wretches unfit to have the smallest authority over any living thing, have a helpless woman for their household slave. These excesses could not exist if women both earned, and had the right to possess, a part of the income of the family.

of competition, remedies will be found for it in time. Palliatives might be applied immediately; for instance, a more rigid exclusion of children from industrial employment, during the years in which they ought to be working only to strengthen their bodies and minds for after-life. Children are necessarily dependent, and under the power of others; and their labour, being not for themselves but for the gain of their parents, is a proper subject for legislative regulation. With respect to the future, we neither believe that improvident multiplication, and the consequent excessive difficulty of gaining a subsistence, will always continue, nor that the division of mankind into capitalists and hired labourers, and the regulation of the reward of labourers mainly by demand and supply, will be for ever, or even much longer, the rule of the world. But so long as competition is the general law of human life, it is tyranny to shut out one-half of the competitors. All who have attained the age of self-government have an equal claim to be permitted to sell whatever kind of useful labour they are capable of, for the price which it will bring.

The third objection to the admission of women to political or professional life, its alleged hardening tendency, belongs to an age now past, and is scarcely to be comprehended by people of the present time. There are still, however, persons who say that the world and its avocations render men selfish and unfeeling; that the struggles, rivalries, and collisions of business and of politics make them harsh and unamiable; that if half the species must unavoidably be given up to these things, it is the more necessary that the other half should be kept free from them; that to

preserve women from the bad influences of the world, is the only chance of preventing men from being wholly given up to them.

There would have been plausibility in this argument when the world was still in the age of violence; when life was full of physical conflict, and every man had to redress his injuries or those of others, by the sword or by the strength of his arm. Women, like priests, by being exempted from such responsibilities, and from some part of the accompanying dangers, may have been enabled to exercise a beneficial influence. But in the present condition of human life, we do not know where those hardening influences are to be found, to which men are subject and from which women are at present exempt. Individuals now-a-days are seldom called upon to fight hand to hand, even with peaceful weapons; personal enmities and rivalities count for little in worldly transactions; the general pressure of circumstances, not the adverse will of individuals, is the obstacle men now have to make head against. That pressure, when excessive, breaks the spirit, and cramps and sours the feelings, but not less of women than of men, since they suffer certainly not less from its evils. There are still quarrels and dislikes, but the sources of them are changed. The feudal chief once found his bitterest enemy in his powerful neighbour, the minister or courtier in his rival for place: but opposition of interest in active life, as a cause of personal animosity, is out of date; the enmities of the present day arise not from great things but small, from what people say of one another, more than from what they do; and if there are hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness, they are to be found

among women fully as much as among men. In the present state of civilization, the notion of guarding women from the hardening influences of the world, could only be realized by secluding them from society altogether. The common duties of common life, as at present constituted, are incompatible with any other softness in women than weakness. Surely weak minds in weak bodies must ere long cease to be even supposed to be either attractive or amiable.

But, in truth, none of these arguments and considerations touch the foundations of the subject. The real question is, whether it is right and expedient that one-half of the human race should pass through life in a state of forced subordination to the other half. If the best state of human society is that of being divided into two parts, one consisting of persons with a will and a substantive existence, the other of humble companions to these persons, attached, each of them to one, for the purpose of bringing up *his* children, and making *his* home pleasant to him; if this is the place assigned to women, it is but kindness to educate them for this; to make them believe that the greatest good fortune which can befal them, is to be chosen by some man for this purpose; and that every other career which the world deems happy or honourable, is closed to them by the law, not of social institutions, but of nature and destiny.

When, however, we ask why the existence of one-half the species should be merely ancillary to that of the other—why each woman should be a mere appendage to a man, allowed to have no interests of her own, that there may be nothing to compete in her mind with his interests and his pleasure; the only

reason which can be given is, that men like it. It is agreeable to them that men should live for their own sake, women for the sake of men: and the qualities and conduct in subjects which are agreeable to rulers, they succeed for a long time in making the subjects themselves consider as their appropriate virtues. Helvetius has met with much obloquy for asserting, that persons usually mean by virtues the qualities which are useful or convenient to themselves. How truly this is said of mankind in general, and how wonderfully the ideas of virtue set afloat by the powerful, are caught and imbibed by those under their dominion, is exemplified by the manner in which the world were once persuaded that the supreme virtue of subjects was loyalty to kings, and are still persuaded that the paramount virtue of womanhood is loyalty to men. Under a nominal recognition of a moral code common to both, in practice self-will and self-assertion form the type of what are designated as manly virtues, while abnegation of self, patience, resignation, and submission to power, unless when resistance is commanded by other interests than their own, have been stamped by general consent as pre-eminently the duties and graces required of women. The meaning being merely, that power makes itself the centre of moral obligation, and that a man likes to have his own will, but does not like that his domestic companion should have a will different from his.

We are far from pretending that in modern and civilized times, no reciprocity of obligation is acknowledged on the part of the stronger. Such an assertion would be very wide of the truth. But even this reciprocity, which has disarmed tyranny, at least in

the higher and middle classes, of its most revolting features, yet when combined with the original evil of the dependent condition of women, has introduced in its turn serious evils.

In the beginning, and among tribes which are still in a primitive condition, women were and are the slaves of men for purposes of toil. All the hard bodily labour devolves on them. The Australian savage is idle, while women painfully dig up the roots on which he lives. An American Indian, when he has killed a deer, leaves it, and sends a woman to carry it home. In a state somewhat more advanced, as in Asia, women were and are the slaves of men for purposes of sensuality. In Europe there early succeeded a third and milder dominion, secured not by blows, nor by locks and bars, but by sedulous inculcation on the mind; feelings also of kindness, and ideas of duty, such as a superior owes to inferiors under his protection, became more and more involved in the relation. But it did not, for many ages, become a relation of companionship, even between unequals. The lives of the two persons were apart. The wife was part of the furniture of home—of the resting-place to which the man returned from business or pleasure. His occupations were, as they still are, among men; his pleasures and excitements also were, for the most part; among men—among his equals. He was a patriarch and a despot within four walls, and irresponsible power had its effect, greater or less according to his disposition, in rendering him domineering, exacting, self-worshipping; when not capriciously or brutally tyrannical. But if the moral

part of his nature suffered, it was not necessarily so, in the same degree, with the intellectual or the active portion. He might have as much vigour of mind and energy of character as his nature enabled him, and as the circumstances of his times allowed. He might write the 'Paradise Lost,' or win the battle of Marengo. This was the condition of the Greeks and Romans, and of the moderns until a recent date. Their relations with their domestic subordinates occupied a mere corner, though a cherished one, of their lives. Their education as men, the formation of their character and faculties, depended mainly on a different class of influences.

It is otherwise now. The progress of improvement has imposed on all possessors of power, and of domestic power among the rest, an increased and increasing sense of correlative obligation. No man now thinks that his wife has no claim upon his actions but such as he may accord to her. All men of any conscience believe that their duty to their wives is one of the most binding of their obligations. Nor is it supposed to consist solely in protection, which, in the present state of civilization, women have almost ceased to need: it involves care for their happiness and consideration of their wishes, with a not unfrequent sacrifice of their own to them. The power of husbands has reached the stage which the power of kings had arrived at, when opinion did not yet question the rightfulness of arbitrary power, but in theory, and to a certain extent in practice, condemned the selfish use of it. This improvement in the moral sentiments of mankind, and increased sense of the consideration due by every man to those who have

no one but himself to look to, has tended to make home more and more the centre of interest, and domestic circumstances and society a larger and larger part of life, and of its pursuits and pleasures. The tendency has been strengthened by the changes of tastes and manners which have so remarkably distinguished the last two or three generations. In days not far distant, men found their excitement and filled up their time in violent bodily exercises, noisy merriment, and intemperance. They have now, in all but the very poorest classes, lost their inclination for these things, and for the coarser pleasures generally; they have now scarcely any tastes but those which they have in common with women, and, for the first time in the world, men and women are really companions. A most beneficial change, if the companionship were between equals; but being between unequals, it produces, what good observers have noticed, though without perceiving its cause, a progressive deterioration among men in what had hitherto been considered the masculine excellences. Those who are so careful that women should not become men, do not see that men are becoming, what they have decided that women should be—are falling into the feebleness which they have so long cultivated in their companions. Those who are associated in their lives, tend to become assimilated in character. In the present closeness of association between the sexes, men cannot retain manliness unless women acquire it.

There is hardly any situation more unfavourable to the maintenance of elevation of character or force of intellect, than to live in the society, and seek by

preference the sympathy, of inferiors in mental endowments. Why is it that we constantly see in life so much of intellectual and moral promise followed by such inadequate performance, but because the aspirant has compared himself only with those below himself, and has not sought improvement or stimulus from measuring himself with his equals or superiors. In the present state of social life, this is becoming the general condition of men. They care less and less for any sympathies, and are less and less under any personal influences, but those of the domestic roof. Not to be misunderstood, it is necessary that we should distinctly disclaim the belief, that women are even now inferior in intellect to men. There are women who are the equals in intellect of any men who ever lived: and comparing ordinary women with ordinary men, the varied though petty details which compose the occupation of most women, call forth probably as much of mental ability, as the uniform routine of the pursuits which are the habitual occupation of a large majority of men. It is from nothing in the faculties themselves, but from the petty subjects and interests on which alone they are exercised, that the companionship of women, such as their present circumstances make them, so often exercises a dissolvent influence on high faculties and aspirations in men. If one of the two has no knowledge and no care about the great ideas and purposes which dignify life, or about any of its practical concerns save personal interests and personal vanities, her conscious, and still more her unconscious influence, will, except in rare cases, reduce to a secondary place in his mind, if

not entirely extinguish, those interests which she cannot or does not share.

Our argument here brings us into collision with what may be termed the moderate reformers of the education of women; a sort of persons who cross the path of improvement on all great questions; those who would maintain the old bad principles, mitigating their consequences. These say, that women should be, not slaves, nor servants, but companions; and educated for that office (they do not say that men should be educated to be the companions of women). But since uncultivated women are not suitable companions for cultivated men, and a man who feels interest in things above and beyond the family circle wishes that his companion should sympathize with him in that interest; they therefore say, let women improve their understanding and taste, acquire general knowledge, cultivate poetry, art, even coquet with science, and some stretch their liberality so far as to say, inform themselves on politics; not as pursuits, but sufficiently to feel an interest in the subjects, and to be capable of holding a conversation on them with the husband, or at least of understanding and imbibing his wisdom. Very agreeable to him, no doubt, but unfortunately the reverse of improving. It is from having intellectual communion only with those to whom they can lay down the law, that so few men continue to advance in wisdom beyond the first stages. The most eminent men cease to improve, if they associate only with disciples. When they have overtopped those who immediately surround them, if they wish for further growth, they must seek for others of their

own stature to consort with. The mental companionship which is improving, is communion between active minds, not mere contact between an active mind and a passive. This inestimable advantage is even now enjoyed, when a strong-minded man and a strong-minded woman are, by a rare chance, united: and would be had far oftener, if education took the same pains to form strong-minded women which it takes to prevent them from being formed. The modern, and what are regarded as the improved and enlightened modes of education of women, abjure, as far as words go, an education of mere show, and profess to aim at solid instruction, but mean by that expression, superficial information on solid subjects. Except accomplishments, which are now generally regarded as to be taught well if taught at all, nothing is taught to women thoroughly. Small portions only of what it is attempted to teach thoroughly to boys, are the whole of what it is intended or desired to teach to women. What makes intelligent beings is the power of thought: the stimuli which call forth that power are the interest and dignity of thought itself, and a field for its practical application. Both motives are cut off from those who are told from infancy that thought, and all its greater applications, are other people's business, while theirs is to make themselves agreeable to other people. High mental powers in women will be but an exceptional accident, until every career is open to them, and until they, as well as men, are educated for themselves and for the world—not one sex for the other.

In what we have said on the effect of the inferior position of women, combined with the present consti-

tution of married life, we have thus far had in view only the most favourable cases, those in which there is some real approach to that union and blending of characters and of lives, which the theory of the relation contemplates as its ideal standard. But if we look to the great majority of cases, the effect of women's legal inferiority, on the character both of women and of men, must be painted in far darker colours. We do not speak here of the grosser brutalities, nor of the man's power to seize on the woman's earnings, or compel her to live with him against her will. We do not address ourselves to any one who requires to have it proved that these things should be remedied. We suppose average cases, in which there is neither complete union nor complete disunion of feelings and character; and we affirm that in such cases the influence of the dependence on the woman's side, is demoralizing to the character of both.

The common opinion is, that whatever may be the case with the intellectual, the moral influence of women over men is almost always salutary. It is, we are often told, the great counteractive of selfishness. However the case may be as to personal influence, the influence of the position tends eminently to promote selfishness. The most insignificant of men, the man who can obtain influence or consideration nowhere else, finds one place where he is chief and head. There is one person, often greatly his superior in understanding, who is obliged to consult him, and whom he is not obliged to consult. He is judge, magistrate, ruler, over their joint concerns; arbiter of all differences between them. The justice or conscience to

which her appeal must be made, is his justice and conscience: it is his to hold the balance and adjust the scales between his own claims or wishes and those of another. His is now the only tribunal, in civilized life, in which the same person is judge and party. A generous mind, in such a situation, makes the balance incline against its own side, and gives the other not less, but more, than a fair equality; and thus the weaker side may be enabled to turn the very fact of dependence into an instrument of power, and in default of justice, take an ungenerous advantage of generosity; rendering the unjust power, to those who make an unselfish use of it, a torment and a burthen. But how is it when average men are invested with this power, without reciprocity and without responsibility? Give such a man the idea that he is first in law and in opinion—that to will is his part, and hers to submit; it is absurd to suppose that this idea merely glides over his mind, without sinking into it, or having any effect on his feelings and practice. The propensity to make himself the first object of consideration, and others at most the second, is not so rare as to be wanting where everything seems purposely arranged for encouraging its indulgence. If there is any self-will in the man, he becomes either the conscious or unconscious despot of his household. The wife, indeed, often succeeds in gaining her objects, but it is by some of the many various forms of indirectness and management.

Thus the position is corrupting equally to both; in the one it produces the vices of power, in the other those of artifice. Women, in their present physical and moral state, having stronger impulses,

would naturally be franker and more direct than men; yet all the old saws and traditions represent them as artful and dissembling. Why? Because their only way to their objects is by indirect paths. In all countries where women have strong wishes and active minds, this consequence is inevitable: and if it is less conspicuous in England than in some other places, it is because Englishwomen, saving occasional exceptions, have ceased to have either strong wishes or active minds.

We are not now speaking of cases in which there is anything deserving the name of strong affection on both sides. That, where it exists, is too powerful a principle not to modify greatly the bad influences of the situation; it seldom, however, destroys them entirely. Much oftener the bad influences are too strong for the affection, and destroy it. The highest order of durable and happy attachments would be a hundred times more frequent than they are, if the affection which the two sexes sought from one another were that genuine friendship, which only exists between equals in privileges as in faculties. But with regard to what is commonly called affection in married life—the habitual and almost mechanical feeling of kindliness, and pleasure in each other's society, which generally grows up between persons who constantly live together, unless there is actual dislike—there is nothing in this to contradict or qualify the mischievous influence of the unequal relation. Such feelings often exist between a sultan and his favourites, between a master and his servants; they are merely examples of the pliability of human nature, which accommodates itself in some degree

even to the worst circumstances, and the commonest natures always the most easily.

With respect to the influence personally exercised by women over men, it, no doubt, renders them less harsh and brutal; in ruder times, it was often the only softening influence to which they were accessible. But the assertion, that the wife's influence renders the man less selfish, contains, as things now are, fully as much error as truth. Selfishness towards the wife herself, and towards those in whom she is interested, the children, though favoured by her dependence, the wife's influence, no doubt, tends to counteract. But the general effect on him of her character, so long as her interests are concentrated in the family, tends but to substitute for individual selfishness a family selfishness, wearing an amiable guise, and putting on the mask of duty. How rarely is the wife's influence on the side of public virtue: how rarely does it do otherwise than discourage any effort of principle by which the private interests or worldly vanities of the family can be expected to suffer. Public spirit, sense of duty towards the public good, is of all virtues, as women are now educated and situated, the most rarely to be found among them; they have seldom even, what in men is often a partial substitute for public spirit, a sense of personal honour connected with any public duty. Many a man, whom no money or personal flattery would have bought, has bartered his political opinions against a title or invitations for his wife; and a still greater number are made mere hunters after the puerile vanities of society, because their wives value them. As for opinions; in Catholic countries, the wife's

influence is another name for that of the priest; he gives her, in the hopes and emotions connected with a future life, a consolation for the sufferings and disappointments which are her ordinary lot in this. Elsewhere, her weight is thrown into the scale either of the most commonplace, or of the most outwardly prosperous opinions: either those by which censure will be escaped, or by which worldly advancement is likeliest to be procured. In England, the wife's influence is usually on the illiberal and anti-popular side: this is generally the gaining side for personal interest and vanity; and what to her is the democracy or liberalism in which she has no part—which leaves her the Pariah it found her? The man himself, when he marries, usually declines into Conservatism; begins to sympathize with the holders of power, more than with its victims, and thinks it his part to be on the side of authority. As to mental progress, except those vulgarer attainments by which vanity or ambition are promoted, there is generally an end to it in a man who marries a woman mentally his inferior; unless, indeed, he is unhappy in marriage, or becomes indifferent. From a man of twenty-five or thirty, after he is married, an experienced observer seldom expects any further progress in mind or feelings. It is rare that the progress already made is maintained. Any spark of the *mens divinior* which might otherwise have spread and become a flame, seldom survives for any length of time unextinguished. For a mind which learns to be satisfied with what it already is—which does not incessantly look forward to a degree of improvement not yet reached—becomes relaxed, self-indulgent, and loses the spring and the tension

which maintain it even at the point already attained. And there is no fact in human nature to which experience bears more invariable testimony than to this —that all social or sympathetic influences which do not raise up, pull down; if they do not tend to stimulate and exalt the mind, they tend to vulgarize it.

For the interest, therefore, not only of women but of men, and of human improvement in the widest sense, the emancipation of women, which the modern world often boasts of having effected, and for which credit is sometimes given to civilization, and sometimes to Christianity, cannot stop where it is. If it were either necessary or just that one portion of mankind should remain mentally and spiritually only half developed, the development of the other portion ought to have been made, as far as possible, independent of their influence. Instead of this, they have become the most intimate, and it may now be said, the only intimate associates of those to whom yet they are sedulously kept inferior; and have been raised just high enough to drag the others down to themselves.

We have left behind a host of vulgar objections, either as not worthy of an answer, or as answered by the general course of our remarks. A few words, however, must be said on one plea, which in England is made much use of for giving an unselfish air to the upholding of selfish privileges, and which, with unobserving, unreflecting people, passes for much more than it is worth. Women, it is said, do not desire—do not seek, what is called their emancipation. On the contrary, they generally disown such claims

when made in their behalf, and fall with *acharnement* upon any one of themselves who identifies herself with their common cause.

Supposing the fact to be true in the fullest extent ever asserted, if it proves that European women ought to remain as they are, it proves exactly the same with respect to Asiatic women; for they, too, instead of murmuring at their seclusion, and at the restraint imposed upon them, pride themselves on it, and are astonished at the effrontery of women who receive visits from male acquaintances, and are seen in the streets unveiled. Habits of submission make men as well as women servile-minded. The vast population of Asia do not desire or value, probably would not accept, political liberty, nor the savages of the forest, civilization; which does not prove that either of those things is undesirable for them, or that they will not, at some future time, enjoy it. Custom hardens human beings to any kind of degradation, by deadening the part of their nature which would resist it. And the case of women is, in this respect, even a peculiar one, for no other inferior caste that we have heard of have been taught to regard their degradation as their honour. The argument, however, implies a secret consciousness that the alleged preference of women for their dependent state is merely apparent, and arises from their being allowed no choice; for if the preference be natural, there can be no necessity for enforcing it by law. To make laws compelling people to follow their inclination, has not hitherto been thought necessary by any legislator. The plea that women do not desire any change, is the same that has been urged, times out of mind, against the proposal of

abolishing any social evil—'there is no complaint;' which is generally not true, and when true, only so because there is not that hope of success, without which complaint seldom makes itself audible to unwilling ears. How does the objector know that women do not desire equality and freedom? He never knew a woman who did not, or would not, desire it for herself individually. It would be very simple to suppose, that if they do desire it they will say so. Their position is like that of the tenants or labourers who vote against their own political interests to please their landlords or employers; with the unique addition, that submission is inculcated on them from childhood, as the peculiar attraction and grace of their character. They are taught to think, that to repel actively even an admitted injustice done to themselves, is somewhat unfeminine, and had better be left to some male friend or protector. To be accused of rebelling against anything which admits of being called an ordinance of society, they are taught to regard as an imputation of a serious offence, to say the least, against the proprieties of their sex. It requires unusual moral courage as well as disinterestedness in a woman, to express opinions favourable to women's enfranchisement, until, at least, there is some prospect of obtaining it. The comfort of her individual life, and her social consideration, usually depend on the good-will of those who hold the undue power; and to possessors of power any complaint, however bitter, of the misuse of it, is a less flagrant act of insubordination than to protest against the power itself. The professions of women in this matter remind us of the State offenders of old, who,

on the point of execution, used to protest their love and devotion to the sovereign by whose unjust mandate they suffered. Griselda herself might be matched from the speeches put by Shakespeare into the mouths of male victims of kingly caprice and tyranny: the Duke of Buckingham, for example, in 'Henry the Eighth,' and even Wolsey. The literary class of women, especially in England, are ostentatious in disclaiming the desire for equality or citizenship, and proclaiming their complete satisfaction with the place which society assigns to them; exercising in this, as in many other respects, a most noxious influence over the feelings and opinions of men, who unsuspectingly accept the servilities of toadyism as concessions to the force of truth, not considering that it is the personal interest of these women to profess whatever opinions they expect will be agreeable to men. It is not among men of talent, sprung from the people, and patronized and flattered by the aristocracy, that we look for the leaders of a democratic movement. Successful literary women are just as unlikely to prefer the cause of women to their own social consideration. They depend on men's opinion for their literary as well as for their feminine successes; and such is their bad opinion of men, that they believe there is not more than one in ten thousand who does not dislike and fear strength, sincerity, or high spirit in a woman. They are therefore anxious to earn pardon and toleration for whatever of these qualities their writings may exhibit on other subjects, by a studied display of submission on this: that they may give no occasion for vulgar men to say (what nothing will prevent vulgar men from saying), that learning makes

women unfeminine, and that literary ladies are likely to be bad wives.

But enough of this; especially as the fact which affords the occasion for this notice, makes it impossible any longer to assert the universal acquiescence of women (saving individual exceptions) in their dependent condition. In the United States, at least, there are women, seemingly numerous, and now organized for action on the public mind, who demand equality in the fullest acceptation of the word, and demand it by a straightforward appeal to men's sense of justice, not plead for it with a timid deprecation of their displeasure.

Like other popular movements, however, this may be seriously retarded by the blunders of its adherents. Tried by the ordinary standard of public meetings, the speeches at the Convention are remarkable for the preponderance of the rational over the declamatory element; but there are some exceptions; and things to which it is impossible to attach any rational meaning, have found their way into the resolutions. Thus, the resolution which sets forth the claims made in behalf of women, after claiming equality in education, in industrial pursuits, and in political rights, enumerates as a fourth head of demand something under the name of 'social and spiritual union,' and 'a medium of expressing the highest moral and spiritual views of justice,' with other similar verbiage, serving only to mar the simplicity and rationality of the other demands: resembling those who would weakly attempt to combine nominal equality between men and women, with enforced distinctions in their privileges and functions. What is

wanted for women is equal rights, equal admission to all social privileges; not a position apart, a sort of sentimental priesthood. To this, the only just and rational principle, both the resolutions and the speeches, for the most part, adhere. They contain so little which is akin to the nonsensical paragraph in question, that we suspect it not to be the work of the same hands as most of the other resolutions. The strength of the cause lies in the support of those who are influenced by reason and principle; and to attempt to recommend it by sentimentalities, absurd in reason, and inconsistent with the principle on which the movement is founded, is to place a good cause on a level with a bad one.

There are indications that the example of America will be followed on this side of the Atlantic; and the first step has been taken in that part of England where every serious movement in the direction of political progress has its commencement—the manufacturing districts of the North. On the 13th of February 1851, a petition of women, agreed to by a public meeting at Sheffield, and claiming the elective franchise, was presented to the House of Lords by the Earl of Carlisle.

DR. WHEWELL ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY.*

IF the worth of Dr. Whewell's writings could be measured by the importance and amplitude of their subjects, no writer of the age could vie with him in merit or usefulness. He has aspired to be not only the historian, but the philosopher and legislator, of almost all the great departments of human knowledge; reducing each to its first principles, and showing how it might be scientifically evolved from these as a connected whole. After endeavouring, in his History and Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences, to place physics, and incidentally metaphysics, on a philosophic foundation, he has made an almost equally ambitious attempt on the subjects of morals and government, of which the two works before us are the results. He is thus entitled to the praise of having done his best to wipe off from the two endowed universities, in one of which he holds a high place, the reproach to which they have so long been justly liable, of neglecting the higher regions of philosophy. By his writings and influence, he has been an agent in that revival of speculation on the most difficult and highest subjects, which has been noticeable for

* *Westminster Review*, October 1852.—1. 'Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England.' By William Whewell, D.D. Master of Trinity College, and Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Cambridge. 1 vol. 8vo. 1852.

2. 'Elements of Morality, including Polity.' By the same Author. 2 vols. 8vo. 1845.

some years past within as well as without the pale of Oxford and Cambridge. And inasmuch as mental activity of any kind is better than torpidity, and bad solutions of the great questions of philosophy are preferable to a lazy ignoring of their existence, whoever has taken so active a part as Dr. Whewell in this intellectual movement, may lay claim to considerable merit.

Unfortunately it is not in the nature of bodies constituted like the English Universities, even when stirred up into something like mental activity, to send forth thought of any but one description. There have been universities (those of France and Germany have at some periods been practically conducted on this principle) which brought together into a body the most vigorous thinkers and the ablest teachers, whatever the conclusions to which their thinking might have led them. But in the English Universities no thought can find place, except that which can reconcile itself with orthodoxy. They are ecclesiastical institutions; and it is the essence of all churches to vow adherence to a set of opinions made up and prescribed, it matters little whether three or thirteen centuries ago. Men will some day open their eyes, and perceive how fatal a thing it is that the instruction of those who are intended to be the guides and governors of mankind should be confided to a collection of persons thus pledged. If the opinions they are pledged to were every one as true as any fact in physical science, and had been adopted, not as they almost always are, on trust and authority, but as the result of the most diligent and impartial examination of which the mind of the recipient was

capable; even then, the engagement under penalties always to adhere to the opinions once assented to, would debilitate and lame the mind, and unfit it for progress, still more for assisting the progress of others. The person who has to think more of what an opinion leads to, than of what is the evidence of it, cannot be a philosopher, or a teacher of philosophers. Of what value is the opinion on any subject, of a man of whom every one knows that by his profession he must hold that opinion? and how can intellectual vigour be fostered by the teaching of those who, even as a matter of duty, would rather that their pupils were weak and orthodox, than strong with freedom of thought? Whoever thinks that persons thus tied are fitting depositories of the trust of educating a people, must think that the proper object of intellectual education is not to strengthen and cultivate the intellect, but to make sure of its adopting certain conclusions: that, in short, in the exercise of the thinking faculty, there is something, either religion, or conservatism, or peace, or whatever it be, more important than truth. Not to dilate further on this topic, it is nearly inevitable, that when persons bound by the vows and placed in the circumstances of an established clergy, enter into the paths of higher speculation, and endeavour to make a philosophy, either purpose or instinct will direct them to the kind of philosophy best fitted to prop up the doctrines to which they are pledged. And when these doctrines are so prodigiously in arrear of the general progress of thought, as the doctrines of the Church of England now are, the philosophy resulting will have a tendency not to promote, but to arrest progress.

Without the slightest wish to speak in disparagement of Dr. Whewell's labours, and with no ground for questioning his sincerity of purpose, we think the preceding remark thoroughly applicable to his philosophical speculations. We do not say the intention, but certainly the tendency, of his efforts, is to shape the whole of philosophy, physical as well as moral, into a form adapted to serve as a support and a justification to any opinions which happen to be established. A writer who has gone beyond all his predecessors in the manufacture of necessary truths, that is, of propositions which, according to him, may be known to be true independently of proof; who ascribes this self-evidence to the larger generalities of all sciences (however little obvious at first) as soon as they have become familiar—was still more certain to regard all moral propositions familiar to him from his early years, as self-evident truths. His 'Elements of Morality' could be nothing better than a classification and systematizing of the opinions which he found prevailing, among those who had been educated according to the approved methods of his own country; or, let us rather say, an apparatus for converting those prevailing opinions, on matters of morality, into reasons for themselves.

This, accordingly, is what we find in Dr. Whewell's volumes: while we have sought in vain for the numerous minor merits, which give a real scientific value to his previous works. If the 'Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences' was, as we think, an erroneous philosophy, it contained much that was not unfit to find place in a better, and was often calculated to suggest deeper thoughts than it possessed of its own.

But in the 'Elements of Morality' he leaves the subject so exactly as he found it,—the book is so mere a catalogue of received opinions, containing nothing to correct any of them, and little which can work with any potency even to confirm them,—that it can scarcely be counted as anything more than one of the thousand waves on the dead sea of commonplace, affording nothing to invite or to reward a separate examination. We should not, therefore, have felt called upon to concern ourselves specially about it, if Dr. Whewell had not, in his more recent publication, 'Lectures on the History of Moral Philosophy in England,' undertaken to characterize and criticise, from his own point of view, all other English writers on moral philosophy; and particularly those who derive their ethical conclusions, not from internal intuition, but from an external standard. So long as he contented himself with giving what we think bad reasons for common opinions, there was not much inducement to interfere with them; but assaults on the only methods of philosophising from which any improvement in ethical opinions can be looked for, ought to be repelled. And in doing this it is necessary to extend our comments to some of Dr. Whewell's substantive opinions also. When he argues in condemnation of any external standard, and especially of utility, or tendency to happiness, as the principle or test of morality, it is material to examine how he gets on without it; how he fares in the attempt to construct a coherent theory of morals on any other basis. We shall make use of his larger work in so far only as it is evidence on this point.

Even with the 'Lectures,' considered as giving an

account of English speculations on moral philosophy previous to the age of Bentham and Paley, it is not our purpose to meddle: Hobbes, therefore, and Locke, must be left in the hands of Dr. Whewell, without any attempt either to correct his estimate of their opinions, or to offer any judgment of our own. This historical sketch suggests, however, one remark of an historical character, not new to any one who is conversant with the writings of English thinkers on ethical subjects. During the greater part of the eighteenth century, the received opinions in religion and ethics were chiefly attacked, as by Shaftesbury, and even by Hume, on the ground of instinctive feelings of virtue, and the theory of a moral taste or sense. As a consequence of this, the defenders of established opinions, both lay and clerical, commonly professed utilitarianism. To the many writers on the side of orthodoxy, of the utilitarian school, mentioned by Dr. Whewell, might be added several, of at least equal note, whom he has omitted; as John Brown, the author of 'Essays on the Characteristics;' Soame Jenyns, and his more celebrated reviewer, Dr. Johnson; all of whom, as explicitly as Bentham, laid down the doctrine that utility is the foundation of morals. This series of writers attained its culmination in Paley, whose treatise, proclaiming without evasion or circumlocution, not only expediency as the end, but (a very different doctrine) simple self-interest as the motive, of virtue, and deducing from these premises all the orthodox conclusions, became the text-book of moral philosophy in one of the two Universities of the Church of England. But a change ensued, and the utilitarian doctrine, which had been

the favourite theory of the defenders of orthodoxy, began to be used by its assailants. In the hands of the French philosophers, and in those of Godwin and of Bentham,—who, though earlier than Godwin in date, was later in acquiring popular influence,—a moral philosophy founded on utility led to many conclusions very unacceptable to the orthodox. For a whole generation, so effectual a fight was kept up against those conclusions, by bayonets in the field, and prosecutions in the courts of justice, that there seemed no necessity for taking much concern about the premises: but when those carnal weapons fell into disuse, and the spirit which had wielded them was laid—when the battle of established opinions in Church and State had again to be fought by argument, a demand arose for metaphysics and moral philosophy, of the kind most remote from that which appeared so full of danger to received opinions. Utility was now abjured as a deadly heresy, and the doctrine of *à priori* or self-evident morality, an end in itself, independent of all consequences, became the orthodox theory. Having once entered into this course, and gone in search of a philosophical system to be extracted from the mind itself, without any external evidence, the defenders of orthodoxy were insensibly led to seek their system where it exists in the most elaborate shape—in the German metaphysicians. It was not without reluctance that they found themselves engaged in this path; for German metaphysics in Germany lay under as grave a suspicion of religious scepticism, as the rival philosophy in England or France. But it was found on trial, that philosophy of this cast admitted of easy adaptation, and

would bend to the very Thirty-nine Articles; as it is the essence of a philosophy which seeks its evidence in internal conviction, that it bears its testimony with equal ease for any conclusions in favour of which there is a predisposition, and is sceptical with the sceptical, and mystical with the mystical. Accordingly, the tone of religious metaphysics, and of the ethical speculations connected with religion, is now altogether Germanized; and Dr. Whewell, by his writings, has done no little to impress upon the metaphysics of orthodoxy this change of character.

It has always been indistinctly felt that the doctrine of *à priori* principles is one and the same doctrine, whether applied to the ὄν or the δέον—to the knowledge of truth or to that of duty; that it belongs to the same general tendency of thought, to extract from the mind itself, without any outward standard, principles and rules of morality, and to deem it possible to discover, by mere introspection into our minds, the laws of external nature. Both forms of this mode of thought attained a brilliant development in Descartes, the real founder of the modern anti-inductive school of philosophy. The Cartesian tradition was never lost, being kept alive by direct descent through Spinoza, Leibnitz, and Kant, to Schelling and Hegel; but the speculations of Bacon and Locke, and the progress of the experimental sciences, gave a long period of predominance to the philosophy of experience; and though many followed out that philosophy into its natural alliances, and acknowledged not only observation and experiment as rulers of the speculative world, but utility of the practical, others thought that it was scientifically possible to separate

the two opinions, and professed themselves Baconians in the physical department, remaining Cartesians in the moral. It will probably be thought by posterity to be the principal merit of the German metaphysicians of the last and present age, that they have proved the impossibility of resting on this middle ground of compromise; and have convinced all thinkers of any force, that if they adhere to the doctrine of *à priori* principles of morals, they must follow Descartes and Hegel in ascribing the same character to the principles of physics.

On the present occasion, it is only with the moral branch of the subject that we have to deal; and we shall begin by showing in what manner Dr. Whewell states the question between us.

'Schemes of morality, that is, modes of deducing the rules of human action, are of two kinds:—those which assert it to be the law of human action to aim at some external object, (external, that is, to the mind which aims,) as, for example, those which in ancient or modern times have asserted pleasure, or utility, or the greatest happiness of the greatest number, to be the true end of human action; and those which would regulate human action by an internal principle or relation, as conscience, or a moral faculty, or duty, or rectitude, or the superiority of reason to desire. These two kinds of schemes may be described respectively as *dependent* and *independent* morality. Now, it is here held that independent morality is the true scheme. We maintain, with Plato, that reason has a natural and rightful authority over desire and affection; with Butler, that there is a difference of kind in our principles of action; with the general voice of mankind, that we must do what is right, at whatever cost of pain and loss. We deny the doctrine of the ancient Epicureans, that pleasure is the supreme good; of Hobbes, that moral rules are only the work of men's mutual fear; of Paley, that what is expedient is

right, and that there is no difference among pleasures except their intensity and duration; and of Bentham, that the rules of human action are to be obtained by casting up the pleasures which actions produce. But though we thus take our stand upon the ground of independent morality, as held by previous writers, we hope that we are (by their aid mainly) able to present it in a more systematic and connected form than has yet been done.'—*Introductory Lecture*, pp. ix. x.

There is in this mode of stating the question, great unfairness to the doctrine of 'dependent morality,' as Dr. Whewell terms it, though the word independent is fully as applicable to it as to the intuition doctrine. He appropriates to his own side of the question all the expressions, such as conscience, duty, rectitude, with which the reverential feelings of mankind towards moral ideas are associated, and cries out, *I* am for these noble things, *you* are for pleasure, or utility. We cannot accept this as a description of the matter in issue. Dr. Whewell is assuming to himself what belongs quite as rightfully to his antagonists. We are as much for conscience, duty, rectitude, as Dr. Whewell. The terms, and all the feelings connected with them, are as much a part of the ethics of utility as of that of intuition. The point in dispute is, what acts are the proper objects of those feelings; whether we ought to take the feelings as we find them, as accident or design has made them, or whether the tendency of actions to promote happiness affords a test to which the feelings of morality should conform. In the same spirit, Dr. Whewell announces it as *his* opinion, as the side *he* takes in this great controversy, 'that we must do what is right, at whatever cost of pain and loss.' As if this was not everybody's opinion: as if

it was not the very meaning of the word right. The matter in debate is, what *is* right, not whether what is right ought to be done. Dr. Whewell represents his opponents as denying an identical proposition, in order that he may claim a monopoly of high principle for his own opinions. The same unfairness pervades the whole phraseology. It is not only Dr. Whewell who 'maintains, with Plato, that reason has a rightful authority over desire and affection.' Everybody maintains it; only, what *is* reason? and by what rule is it to guide and govern the desires and affections? The description of Bentham, as obtaining his rule of conduct by 'casting up the pleasures which actions produce,' ought to be 'casting up the pleasures and pains which actions produce:' a very different thing.

As might be expected from the historical character of the Lectures, the discussion of opinions mostly assumes the form of criticism on writers. Dr. Whewell's objections to utility, or the 'greatest happiness,' as the standard of morals, are chiefly contained in his animadversions on Paley and on Bentham. It would be quite open to a defender of the principle of utility, to refuse incumbering himself with a defence of either of those authors. The principle is not bound up with what they have said in its behalf, nor with the degree of felicity which they may have shown in applying it. As for Paley, we resign him without compunction to the tender mercies of Dr. Whewell. It concerns Dr. Whewell more than ourselves to uphold the reputation of a writer, who, whatever principle of morals he professed, seems to have had no object but to insert it as a foundation underneath the existing set of opinions, ethical and

political; who, when he had laid down utility as the fundamental axiom, and the recognition of general rules as the condition of its application, took his leave of scientific analysis, and betook himself to picking up utilitarian reasons by the wayside, in proof of all accredited doctrines, and in defence of most tolerated practices. Bentham was a moralist of another stamp. With him, the first use to be made of his ultimate principle, was to erect on it, as a foundation, secondary or middle principles, capable of serving as premises for a body of ethical doctrine not derived from existing opinions, but fitted to be their test. Without such middle principles, an universal principle, either in science or in morals, serves for little but a thesaurus of commonplaces for the discussion of questions, instead of a means of deciding them. If Bentham has been regarded by subsequent adherents of a morality grounded on the 'greatest happiness,' as in a peculiar sense the founder of that system of ethics, it is not because, as Dr. Whewell imagines (p. 190), he either thought himself, or was thought by others, to be the 'discoverer of the principle,' but because he was the first who, keeping clear of the direct and indirect influences of all doctrines inconsistent with it, deduced a set of subordinate generalities from utility alone, and by these consistently tested all particular questions. This great service, previously to which a scientific doctrine of ethics on the foundation of utility was impossible, has been performed by Bentham (though with a view to the exigencies of legislation more than to those of morals) in a manner, as far as it goes, eminently meritorious, and so as to indicate clearly the way to complete the scheme. We must at

the same time qualify our approbation by adding, not that his practical conclusions in morals were often wrong, for we think that as far as they went they were mostly right; but that there were large deficiencies and hiatuses in his scheme of human nature and life, and a consequent want of breadth and comprehension in his secondary principles, which led him often to deduce just conclusions from premises so narrow as to provoke many minds to a rejection of what was nevertheless truth. It is by his *method* chiefly that Bentham, as we think, justly earned a position in moral science analogous to that of Bacon in physical. It is because he was the first to enter into the right mode of working ethical problems, though he worked many of them, as Bacon did physical, on insufficient data. Dr. Whewell's shafts, however, seldom touch Bentham where he is really vulnerable; they are mostly aimed at his strong points.

Before commencing his attack on Bentham's opinions, Dr. Whewell gives a sketch of his life. In this there is an apparent desire to be just to Bentham, as far as the writer's opinions allow. But there is in some of the strictures a looseness of expression, scarcely excusable in an extemporaneous lecture, and still less in a printed book. 'He (Bentham) showed very early that peculiar one-sidedness in his mode of asserting and urging his opinions, which made him think all moderation with regard to his opponents superfluous and absurd' (p. 189). What is here called 'one-sidedness in his mode of asserting and urging his opinions,' must mean one-sidedness in the opinions themselves. It

could not be Bentham's 'mode of asserting his opinions,' that 'made him think' whatever he did think. This is as if any one should say, 'his speaking only English made him unable to understand French,' or 'his peculiar habit of fighting made him think it superfluous and absurd to keep the peace.' Again (p. 190), 'Bentham appears to have been one of those persons to whom everything which passes through their own thoughts assumes quite a different character and value from that which the same thing had when it passed through the thoughts of other persons.' If a thought in a person's own mind did not assume a different character from what the same thought had in other minds, people might as well think by deputy.

A more serious injustice to Bentham is that of citing, as is constantly done in this volume, the book called 'Deontology,' as the authentic exposition of Bentham's philosophy of morals. Dr. Whewell would, no doubt, justify this by saying that the book in question is the only treatise expressly and exclusively on morals, which we have from Bentham. It is true that we have no other; but the 'Deontology' was not, and does not profess to be, written by Bentham. Still less ought that book to be represented as the embodiment of the opinions and mental characteristics of all who share Bentham's general conception of ethics. After charging the compiler of the 'Deontology' with profound ignorance, and saying that it is almost 'superfluous to notice misstatements so gross and partiality so blind,' Dr. Whewell adds that 'such misrepresentations and such unfairness are the usual style of controversy of him (Bentham) and his disciples;

and it is fit that we, in entering upon the consideration of their writings, should be aware of this.' Who are the persons here included under the name of Bentham's 'disciples,' we are not enabled to judge; nor are we aware that Bentham ever had any disciples, in Dr. Whewell's sense of the term. As far as our means of observation have gone, which in this matter are considerably greater than Dr. Whewell's, those who, from the amount of their intellectual obligations to Bentham, would be the most likely to be classed by Dr. Whewell as Benthamites, were and are persons in an unusual degree addicted to judging and thinking for themselves; persons remarkable for learning willingly from all masters, but swearing blind fealty to none. It is also a fact, with which Dr. Whewell cannot be altogether unacquainted, that among them there have been men of the widest and most accurate acquirements in history and philosophy, against whom the accusation of ignorance of the opinions which they controverted would be as unfounded as the imputation of blind partiality. We protest against including them and Bentham in an imaginary sect of which the 'Deontology' is to be considered the gospel. Bentham's merits or demerits must stand on what is contained in the books written by himself.

Among these, the one in which the doctrine of utility is expressly discussed, and contrasted with the various ethical doctrines opposed to it, is the 'Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation,' published in 1789. On this Dr. Whewell comments as follows:—

'The first chapter of this work is 'On the Principle

of Utility:' the second 'On Principles adverse to that of Utility.' These adverse principles are stated to be two: the Principle of Asceticism, and the Principle of Sympathy.' (Bentham calls it the Principle of Sympathy and Antipathy, which is already a considerable difference.) 'The principle of asceticism is that principle which approves of actions in proportion as they tend to *diminish* human happiness, and, conversely, disapproves of them as they tend to augment it. The principle of sympathy is that which approves or disapproves of certain actions 'merely because a man finds himself disposed to approve or disapprove of them, holding up that approbation or disapprobation as a sufficient reason for itself, and disclaiming the necessity of looking out for any extrinsic ground.' And these two principles are, it seems, according to Bentham's view, the only principles which are, or which can be, opposed to the principle of utility!

'Now it is plain that these are not only not fair representations of any principles ever held by moralists, or by any persons speaking gravely and deliberately, but that they are too extravagant and fantastical to be accepted even as caricatures of any such principles. For who ever approved of actions because they tend to make mankind miserable? or who ever said anything which could, even in an intelligible way of exaggeration, be so represented? . . . But who then are the ascetic school who are thus ridiculed? We could not, I think, guess from the general description thus given; but from a note, it appears that he had the Stoical philosophers and the religious ascetics in his mind. With regard to the Stoics, it would of course be waste of time and thought to defend them

from such coarse buffoonery as this, which does not touch their defects, whatever these may be,' &c.—(p. 202.)

Not solely for the due estimation of Bentham, but for the right understanding of the utilitarian controversy, it is important to know what the truth is, respecting the points here in issue between Bentham and Dr. Whewell.

Undoubtedly no one has set up, in opposition to the 'greatest happiness' principle, a 'greatest unhappiness' principle, as the standard of virtue. But it was Bentham's business not merely to discuss the avowed principles of his opponents, but to draw out those which, without being professed as principles, were implied in detail, or were essential to support the judgments passed in particular cases. His own doctrine being that the increase of pleasure and the prevention of pain were the proper ends of all moral rules, he had for his opponents all who contended that pleasure could ever be an evil or pain a good in itself, apart from its consequences. Now this, whatever Dr. Whewell may say, the religious ascetics really did. They held that self-mortification, or even self-torture, practised for its own sake, and not for the sake of any useful end, was meritorious. It matters not that they may have expected to be rewarded for these merits by consideration in this world, or by the favour of an invisible tyrant in a world to come. So far as this life was concerned, their doctrine required it to be supposed that pain was a thing to be sought, and pleasure to be avoided. Bentham generalized this into a maxim, which he called the principle of asceticism. The Stoics did not

go so far as the ascetics; they stopped half-way. They did not say that pain is a good, and pleasure an evil. But they said, and boasted of saying, that pain is no evil, and pleasure no good: and this is all, and more than all, that Bentham imputes to them, as may be seen by any one who reads that chapter of his book. This, however, was enough to place them, equally with the ascetics, in direct opposition to Bentham, since they denied his supreme end to be an end at all. And hence he classed them and the ascetics together, as professing the direct negation of the utilitarian standard.

In the other division of his opponents he placed those who, though they did not deny pleasure to be a good and pain an evil, refused to consider the pain or the pleasure which an action or a class of actions tends to produce, as the criterion of its morality. As the former category of opponents were described by Bentham as followers of the 'principle of asceticism,' so he described these as followers of 'the principle of sympathy and antipathy;' not because they had themselves generalized their principle of judgment, or would have acknowledged it when placed undisguised before them; but because, at the bottom of what they imposed on themselves and others as reasons, he could find nothing else; because they all, in one phrase or another, placed the test of right and wrong in a feeling of approbation or disapprobation, thus making the feeling its own reason and its own justification. This portion of Bentham's doctrine can only be fairly exhibited in his own words.

'It is manifest that this [the principle of sympathy and antipathy] is rather a principle in name than in reality; it is

not a positive principle of itself, so much as a term employed to signify the negation of all principle. What one expects to find in a principle is something that points out some external consideration as a means of warranting and guiding the internal sentiments of approbation and disapprobation: this expectation is but ill fulfilled by a proposition which does neither more nor less than hold up each of these sentiments as a ground and standard for itself.

'In looking over the catalogue of human actions (says a partisan of this principle) in order to determine which of them are to be marked with the seal of disapprobation, you need but to take counsel of your own feelings; whatever you find in yourself a propensity to condemn, is wrong for that very reason. For the same reason it is also meet for punishment: in what proportion it is adverse to utility, or whether it be adverse to utility at all, is a matter that makes no difference. In that same proportion also is it meet for punishment: if you hate much, punish much; if you hate little, punish little: punish as you hate. If you hate not at all, punish not at all: the fine feelings of the soul are not to be overborne and tyrannized by the harsh and rugged dictates of political utility.

'The various systems that have been formed concerning the standard of right and wrong, may all be reduced to the principle of sympathy and antipathy. One account may serve for all of them. They consist, all of them, in so many contrivances for avoiding the obligation of appealing to any external standard, and for prevailing upon the reader to accept of the author's sentiment or opinion as a reason for itself. The phrase is different, but the principle the same.

'It is curious enough to observe the variety of inventions men have hit upon, and the variety of phrases they have brought forward, in order to conceal from the world, and if possible from themselves, this very general, and therefore very pardonable self-sufficiency.

'One man says, he has a thing made on purpose to tell him what is right and what is wrong, and that it is called a *moral sense;* and then he goes to work at his ease, and says, such a

thing is right, and such a thing is wrong—why? 'because my moral sense tells me it is.'

'Another man comes and alters the phrase; leaving out *moral*, and putting in *common* in the room of it. He then tells you, that his common sense teaches him what is right and wrong, as much as the other's moral sense did: meaning, by common sense, a sense of some kind or other, which, he says, is possessed by all mankind; the sense of those, whose sense is not the same as the author's, being struck out of the account as not worth taking. This contrivance does better than the other; for a moral sense being a new thing, a man may feel about him a good while without being able to find it out; but common sense is as old as the creation; and there is no man but would be ashamed to be thought not to have as much of it as his neighbours. It has another great advantage; by appearing to share power, it lessens envy: for when a man gets up upon this ground, in order to anathematize those who differ from him, it is not by a *sic volo sic jubeo*, but by a *velitis jubeatis*.

'Another man comes, and says, that as to a moral sense indeed, he cannot find that he has any such thing; that, however, he has an *understanding*, which will do quite as well. This understanding, he says, is the standard of right and wrong: it tells him so and so. All good and wise men understand as he does: if other men's understandings differ in any point from his, so much the worse for them; it is a sure sign they are either defective or corrupt.

'Another man says, that there is an eternal and immutable rule of right; that that rule of right dictates so and so; and then he begins giving you his sentiments upon anything that comes uppermost; and these sentiments (you are to take for granted) are so many branches of the eternal rule of right.

'Another man, or perhaps the same man (it's no matter), says, that there are certain practices conformable, and others repugnant, to the fitness of things; and then he tells you, at his leisure, what practices are conformable and what repugnant; just as he happens to like a practice or dislike it.

'A great multitude of people are continually talking of the law of nature; and then they go on giving you their sentiments about what is right and what is wrong; and these sentiments, you are to understand, are so many chapters and sections of the law of nature.

'We have one philosopher who says, there is no harm in anything in the world but in telling a lie; and that if, for example, you were to murder your own father, this would only be a particular way of saying, he was not your father. Of course, when this philosopher sees anything that he does not like, he says, it is a particular way of telling a lie. It is saying, that the act ought to be done, or may be done, when, *in truth*, it ought not to be done.'—(chap. ii.)

To this Dr. Whewell thinks it a sufficient answer to call it extravagant ridicule, and to ask, 'Who ever asserted that he approved or disapproved of actions merely because he found himself disposed to do so, and that this was reason sufficient in itself for his moral judgments?' Dr. Whewell will find that this by no means disposes of Bentham's doctrine. Bentham did not mean that people 'ever asserted' that they approved or condemned actions only because they felt disposed to do so. He meant that they do it without asserting it; that they find certain feelings of approbation and disapprobation in themselves, take for granted that these feelings are the right ones, and when called on to say anything in justification of their approbation or disapprobation, produce phrases which mean nothing but the fact of the approbation or disapprobation itself. If the hearer or reader feels in the same way, the phrases pass muster; and a great part of all the ethical reasoning in books and in the world is of this sort. All this is not only true, but cannot consistently be denied by those who, like

Dr. Whewell, consider the moral feelings as their own justification. Dr. Whewell will doubtless say that the feelings they appeal to are not their own individually, but a part of universal human nature. Nobody denies that they say so: a feeling of liking or aversion to an action, confined to an individual, would have no chance of being accepted as a reason. The appeal is always to something which is assumed to belong to all mankind. But it is not of much consequence whether the feeling which is set up as its own standard is the feeling of an individual human being, or of a multitude. A feeling is not proved to be right, and exempted from the necessity of justifying itself, because the writer or speaker is not only conscious of it in himself, but expects to find it in other people; because instead of saying 'I,' he says 'you and I.' If it is alleged that the intuitive school require, as an authority for the feeling, that it should *in fact* be universal, we deny it. They assume the utmost latitude of arbitrarily determining whose votes deserve to be counted. They either ignore the existence of dissentients, or leave them out of the account, on the pretext that they have the feeling which they deny having, or if not, that they ought to have it. This falsification of the universal suffrage which is ostensibly appealed to, is not confined, as is often asserted, to cases in which the only dissentients are barbarous tribes. The same measure is dealt out to whole ages and nations, the most conspicuous for the cultivation and development of their mental faculties; and to individuals among the best and wisest of their respective countries. The explanation of the matter is, the inability of persons in general to conceive that

feelings of right and wrong, which have been deeply implanted in their minds by the teaching they have from infancy received from all around them, can be sincerely thought by any one else to be mistaken or misplaced. This is the mental infirmity which Bentham's philosophy tends especially to correct, and Dr. Whewell's to perpetuate. Things which were really believed by all mankind, and for which all were convinced that they had the unequivocal evidence of their senses, have been proved to be false: as that the sun rises and sets. Can immunity from similar error be claimed for the moral feelings? when all experience shows that those feelings are eminently artificial, and the product of culture; that even when reasonable, they are no more spontaneous than the growth of corn and wine (which are quite as natural), and that the most senseless and pernicious feelings can as easily be raised to the utmost intensity by inculcation, as hemlock and thistles could be reared to luxuriant growth by sowing them instead of wheat. Bentham, therefore, did not judge too severely a kind of ethics whereby any implanted sentiment which is tolerably general may be erected into a moral law, binding, under penalties, on all mankind. The contest between the morality which appeals to an external standard, and that which grounds itself on internal conviction, is the contest of progressive morality against stationary—of reason and argument against the deification of mere opinion and habit. The doctrine that the existing order of things is the natural order, and that, being natural, all innovation upon it is criminal, is as vicious in morals, as it is

now at last admitted to be in physics, and in society and government.

Let us now consider Dr. Whewell's objections to utility as the foundation of ethics.

'Let it be taken for granted, as a proposition which is true, if the terms which it involves be duly understood, that actions are right and virtuous in proportion as they promote the happiness of mankind; the actions being considered upon the whole, and with regard to all their consequences. Still, I say, we cannot make this truth the basis of morality, for two reasons: first, we cannot calculate all the consequences of any action, and thus cannot estimate the degree in which it promotes human happiness; second, happiness is derived from moral elements, and therefore we cannot properly derive morality from happiness. The calculable happiness resulting from actions cannot determine their virtue: first, because the resulting happiness is not calculable; and secondly, because the virtue is one of the things which determine the resulting happiness.'—(p. 210.)

The first of these arguments is an irrelevant truism. 'We cannot calculate *all* the consequences of any action.' If Dr. Whewell can point out any department of human affairs in which we can do *all* that would be desirable, he will have found something new. But because we cannot foresee everything, is there no such thing as foresight? Does Dr. Whewell mean to say that no estimate can be formed of consequences, which can be any guide for our conduct, unless we can calculate *all* consequences? that because we cannot predict every effect which may follow from a person's death, we cannot know that the liberty of murder would be destructive to human happiness? Dr. Whewell, in his zeal against the morality of con-

sequences, commits the error of proving too much. Whether morality is or is not a question of consequences, he cannot deny that prudence is; and if there is such a thing as prudence, it is because the consequences of actions *can* be calculated. Prudence, indeed, depends on a calculation of the consequences of individual actions, while for the establishment of moral rules it is only necessary to calculate the consequences of classes of actions—a much easier matter. It is certainly a very effectual way of proving that morality does not depend on expediency, to maintain that there is no such thing as expediency—that we have no means of knowing whether anything is expedient or not. Unless Dr. Whewell goes this length, to what purpose is what he says about the uncertainty of consequences? Uncertain or certain, we are able to guide ourselves by them, otherwise human life could not exist. And there is hardly any one concerned in the business of life, who has not daily to decide questions of expediency far more knotty than those which Dr. Whewell so coolly pronounces to be insoluble.

But let us examine more closely what Dr. Whewell finds to say for the proposition, that 'if we ask whether a given action will increase or diminish the total amount of human happiness, it is impossible to answer with any degree of certainty.'

'Take ordinary cases. I am tempted to utter a flattering falsehood: to gratify some sensual desire contrary to ordinary moral rules. How shall I determine, on the greatest happiness principle, whether the act is virtuous, or the contrary? In the first place, the direct effect of each act is to give pleasure, to another by flattery, to myself by sensual gratification; and pleasure is the material of happiness, in the scheme we

are now considering. But by the flattering lie I promote falsehood, which is destructive of confidence, and so, of human comfort. Granted that I do this in some degree—although I may easily say that I shall never allow myself to speak falsely, except when it will give pleasure; and thus I may maintain that I shall not shake confidence in any case in which it is of any value. But granted that I do, in some degree, shake the general fabric of mutual human confidence by my flattering lie,—still the question remains, *how much* I do this: whether in such a degree as to overbalance the pleasure, which is the primary and direct consequence of the act. How small must be the effect of my solitary act upon the whole scheme of human action and habit! how clear and decided is the direct effect of increasing the happiness of my hearer! And in the same way we may reason concerning the sensual gratification. Who will know it? Who will be influenced by it of those who do know it? What appreciable amount of pain will it produce in its consequences, to balance the palpable pleasure, which, according to our teachers, is the only real good? It appears to me that it is impossible to answer these questions in any way which will prove, on these principles, mendacious flattery, and illegitimate sensuality, to be vicious and immoral. They may possibly produce, take in all their effects, a balance of evil; but if they do, it is by some process which we cannot trace with any clearness, and the result is one which we cannot calculate with any certainty, or even probability; and therefore, on this account, because the resulting evil of such falsehood and sensuality is not calculable or appreciable, we cannot, by calculation of resulting evil, show falsehood and sensuality to be vices. And the like is true of other vices; and, on this ground, the construction of a scheme of morality on Mr. Bentham's plan is plainly impossible.'—(p. 211.)

Dr. Whewell supposes his self-deceiving utilitarian to be very little master of his own principles. If the effect of a 'solitary act upon the whole scheme of human action and habit' is small, the addition which

the accompanying pleasure makes to the general mass of human happiness is small likewise. So small, in the great majority of cases, are both, that we have no scales to weigh them against each other, taken singly. We must look at them multiplied, and in large masses. The portion of the tendencies of an action which belong to it not individually, but as a violation of a general rule, are as certain and as calculable as any other consequences; only they must be examined not in the individual case, but in classes of cases. Take, for example, the case of murder. There are many persons to kill whom would be to remove men who are a cause of no good to any human being, of cruel physical and moral suffering to several, and whose whole influence tends to increase the mass of unhappiness and vice. Were such a man to be assassinated, the balance of traceable consequences would be greatly in favour of the act. The counter-consideration, on the principle of utility, is, that unless persons were punished for killing, and taught not to kill; that if it were thought allowable for any one to put to death at pleasure any human being whom he believes that the world would be well rid of, nobody's life would be safe. To this Dr. Whewell answers—

'How does it appear that the evil, that is, the pain, arising from violating a general rule once, is too great to be overbalanced by the pleasurable consequences of that single violation? The actor says, I acknowledge the general rule—I do not deny its value; but I do not intend that this one act should be drawn into consequence.'—(p. 212.)

But it does not depend on him whether or not it shall be drawn into consequence. If one person may break through the rule on his own judgment, the

same liberty cannot be refused to others; and since no one could rely on the rule's being observed, the rule would cease to exist. If a hundred infringements would produce all the mischief implied in the abrogation of the rule, a hundredth part of that mischief must be debited to each one of the infringements, though we may not be able to trace it home individually. And this hundredth part will generally far outweigh any good expected to arise from the individual act. We say generally, not universally; for the admission of exceptions to rules is a necessity equally felt in all systems of morality. To take an obvious instance, the rule against homicide, the rule against deceiving, the rule against taking advantage of superior physical strength, and various other important moral rules, are suspended against enemies in the field, and partially against malefactors in private life: in each case suspended as far as is required by the peculiar nature of the case. That the moralities arising from the special circumstances of the action may be so important as to overrule those arising from the class of acts to which it belongs, perhaps to take it out of the category of virtues into that of crimes, or *vice versâ*, is a liability common to all ethical systems.

And here it may be observed that Dr. Whewell, in his illustration drawn from flattering lies, gives to the side he advocates a colour of rigid adherence to principle, which the fact does not bear out. Is none of the intercourse of society carried on by those who hold the common opinions, by means of what is here meant by 'flattering lies?' Does no one of Dr. Whewell's way of thinking say, or allow it to be

thought, that he is glad to see a visitor whom he wishes away? Does he never ask acquaintances or relatives to stay when he would prefer them to go, or invite them when he hopes that they will refuse? Does he never show any interest in persons and things he cares nothing for, or send people away believing in his friendly feeling, to whom his real feeling is indifference, or even dislike? Whether these things are right, we are not now going to discuss. For our part, we think that flattery should be only permitted to those who can flatter without lying, as all persons of sympathizing feelings and quick perceptions can. At all events, the existence of exceptions to moral rules is no stumbling-block peculiar to the principle of utility. The essential is, that the exception should be itself a general rule; so that, being of definite extent, and not leaving the expediencies to the partial judgment of the agent in the individual case, it may not shake the stability of the wider rule in the cases to which the reason of the exception does not extend. This is an ample foundation for 'the construction of a scheme of morality.' With respect to the means of inducing people to conform in their actions to the scheme so formed, the utilitarian system depends, like all other schemes of morality, on the external motives supplied by law and opinion, and the internal feelings produced by education or reason. It is thus no worse off in this respect than any other scheme—we might rather say, much better; inasmuch as people are likely to be more willing to conform to rules when a reason is given for them.

Dr. Whewell's second argument against the happi-

ness principle is, that the morality of actions cannot depend on the happiness they produce, because the happiness depends on the morality.

'Why should a man be truthful and just? Because acts of veracity and justice, even if they do not produce immediate gratification to him and his friends in other ways (and it may easily be that they do not), at least produce pleasure in this way, that they procure him his own approval and that of all good men. To us this language is intelligible and significant; but the Benthamite must analyze it further. What does it mean according to him? A man's own approval of his act, means that he thinks it virtuous. And therefore the matter stands thus. He (being a Benthamite) thinks it virtuous, because it gives him pleasure; and it gives him pleasure because he thinks it virtuous. This is a vicious circle, quite as palpable as any of those in which Mr. Bentham is so fond of representing his adversaries as revolving. And in like manner with regard to the approval of others. The action is virtuous, says the Benthamite, because it produces pleasure; namely, the pleasure arising from the approval of neighbours: they approve it and think it virtuous, he also says, because it gives pleasure. The virtue depends upon the pleasure, the pleasure depends upon the virtue. Here again is a circle from which there is no legitimate egress. We may grant that, taking into account all the elements of happiness—the pleasures of self-approval—of peace of mind and harmony within us, and of the approval of others—of the known sympathy of all good men;—we may grant that, including these elements, virtue always does produce an overbalance of happiness; but then we cannot make this moral truth the basis of morality, because we cannot extricate the happiness and the virtue the one from the other, so as to make the first, the happiness, the foundation of the second, the virtue.'—(p. 215.)

In Dr. Whewell's first argument against utility, he was obliged to assert that it is impossible for human beings to know that some actions are useful and others

hurtful. In the present, he forgets against what principle he is combating, and draws out an elaborate argument against something else. What he now appears to be contending against, is the doctrine (whether really held by any one or not), that the test of morality is the greatest happiness of the agent himself. It argues total ignorance of Bentham, to represent him as saying that an action is virtuous because it produces 'the approbation of neighbours,' and as making so 'fluctuating' a thing as 'public opinion,' and such a 'loose and wide abstraction as education,' the 'basis of morality.' When Bentham talks of public opinion in connexion with morality, he is not talking of the 'basis of morality' at all. He was the last person to found the morality of actions upon anybody's opinion of them. He founded it upon facts: namely, upon the observed tendencies of the actions. Nor did he ever dream of defining morality to be the self-interest of the agent. His 'greatest happiness principle' was the greatest happiness of mankind, and of all sensitive beings. When he talks of education, and of 'the popular or moral sanction,' meaning the opinion of our fellow-creatures, it is not as constituents or tests of virtue, but as *motives* to it; as means of making the self-interest of the individual *accord* with the greatest happiness principle.*

* It is curious that while Dr. Whewell here confounds the Happiness theory of Morals with the theory of Motives sometimes called the Selfish System, and attacks the latter as Bentham's, under the name of the former, Dr. Whewell himself, in his larger work, adopts the Selfish theory. Happiness, he says (meaning, as he explains, our own happiness), is 'our being's end and aim;' we cannot desire anything else unless by identifying it with our happiness. (Elements, i. 359). To this we should have nothing to object, if by identification was meant that what we desire unselfishly must first, by a mental process, become an actual part of what

Dr. Whewell's remark, therefore, that the approval of our fellow-creatures, presupposing moral ideas, cannot be the foundation of morality, has no application against Bentham, nor against the principle of utility. It may however be pertinently remarked, that the moral ideas which this approval presupposes, are no other than those of utility and hurtfulness. There is no great stretch of hypothesis in supposing that in proportion as mankind are aware of the tendencies of actions to produce happiness or misery, they will like and commend the first, abhor and reprobate the second. How these feelings of natural complacency and natural dread and aversion directed towards actions, come to assume the peculiar character of what we term *moral* feelings, is not a question of ethics but of metaphysics, and very fit to be discussed in its proper place. Bentham did not concern himself with it. He left it to other thinkers. It sufficed him that the perceived influence of actions on human happiness is cause enough, both in reason and in fact, for strong feelings of favour to some actions and of hatred towards others. From the sympathetic reac-

we seek as our own happiness; that the good of others becomes our pleasure because we have learnt to find pleasure in it: this is, we think, the true philosophical account of the matter. But we do not understand this to be Dr. Whewell's meaning: for in an argument to prove that there is no virtue without religion, he says that religion alone can assure us of the identity of happiness with duty. Now, if the happiness connected with duty were the happiness we find *in* our duty, self-consciousness would give us a full account of this, without religion. The happiness, therefore, which Dr. Whewell means, must consist, not in the thing itself, but in a reward appended to it: and when he says that there can be no morality unless we believe that happiness is identical with duty, and that we cannot believe this apart from 'the belief in God's government of the world,' he must mean that no one would act virtuously unless he believed that God would reward him for it. In Dr. Whewell's view of morality, therefore, disinterestedness has no place.

tion of these feelings in the imagination and self-consciousness of the agent, naturally arise the more complex feelings of self-approbation and self-reproach, or, to avoid all disputed questions, we will merely say of satisfaction and dissatisfaction with ourselves. All this must be admitted, whatever else may be denied. Whether the greatest happiness is the principle of morals or not, people do desire their own happiness, and do consequently like the conduct in other people which they think promotes it, and dislike that which visibly endangers it. This is absolutely all that Bentham postulates. Grant this, and you have his popular sanction, and its reaction on the agent's own mind, two influences tending, in proportion to mankind's enlightenment, to keep the conduct of each in the line which promotes the general happiness. Bentham thinks that there is no other true morality than this, and that the so-called moral sentiments, whatever their origin or composition, should be trained to act in this direction only. And Dr. Whewell's attempt to find anything illogical or incoherent in this theory, only proves that he does not yet understand it.

Dr. Whewell puts the last hand to his supposed refutation of Bentham's principle, by what he thinks a crushing *reductio ad absurdum*. The reader might make a hundred guesses before discovering what this is. We have not yet got over our astonishment, not at Bentham, but at Dr. Whewell. See, he says, to what consequences your greatest happiness principle leads! Bentham says that it is as much a moral duty to regard the pleasures and pains of other animals as those of human beings. We cannot resist quoting

the admirable passage which Dr. Whewell cites from Bentham, with the most *naïf* persuasion that everybody will regard it as reaching the last pitch of paradoxical absurdity.

'Under the Gentoo and Mahometan religion the interests of the rest of the animal kingdom seem to have met with some attention. Why have they not, universally, with as much as those of human creatures, allowance made for the difference in point of sensibility? Because the laws that are, have been the work of mutual fear; a sentiment which the less rational animals have not had the same means as man has of turning to account. Why ought they not? No reason can be given. The day may come when the rest of the animal creation may acquire those rights which never could have been withholden from them but by the hand of tyranny. It may come one day to be recognised that the number of the legs, the villosity of the skin, or the termination of the *os sacrum*, are reasons insufficient for abandoning a sensitive being to the caprice of a tormentor. What else is it that should trace the insuperable line? Is it the faculty of reason, or perhaps the faculty of discourse? But a full-grown horse or dog is beyond comparison a more rational, as well as a more conversable animal, than an infant of a day, a week, or even a month old. But suppose the case were otherwise, what would it avail? The question is not, can they reason? nor, can they speak? but, can they suffer?'

This noble anticipation, in 1780, of the better morality of which a first dawn has been seen in the laws enacted nearly fifty years afterwards against cruelty to animals, is in Dr. Whewell's eyes the finishing proof that the morality of happiness is absurd!

'The pleasures of animals are elements of a very different order from the pleasures of man. We are bound to endeavour to augment the pleasures of men, not only because they are

pleasures, but because they are human pleasures. We are bound to men by the universal tie of humanity, of human brotherhood. We have no such tie to animals.'

This then is Dr. Whewell's noble and disinterested ideal of virtue. Duties, according to him, are only duties to ourselves and our like.

'We are to be *humane* to them, because we are *human*, not because we and they alike feel *animal* pleasures. . . . The morality which depends upon the increase of pleasure alone, would make it our duty to increase the pleasures of pigs or of geese rather than that of men, if we were sure that the pleasures we could give them were greater than the pleasures of men. . . . . It is not only not an obvious, but to most persons not a tolerable doctrine, that we may sacrifice the happiness of men provided we can in that way produce an overplus of pleasure to cats, dogs, and hogs.'—(pp. 223–5.)

It is 'to most persons' in the Slave States of America not a tolerable doctrine that we may sacrifice any portion of the happiness of white men for the sake of a greater amount of happiness to black men. It would have been intolerable five centuries ago 'to most persons' among the feudal nobility, to hear it asserted that the greatest pleasure or pain of a hundred serfs ought not to give way to the smallest of a nobleman. According to the standard of Dr. Whewell, the slavemasters and the nobles were right. They too felt themselves 'bound' by a 'tie of brotherhood' to the white men and to the nobility, and felt no such tie to the negroes and serfs. And if a feeling on moral subjects is right because it is natural, their feeling was justifiable. Nothing is more natural to human beings, nor, up to a certain point in cultivation, more universal, than to estimate the pleasures and pains of

others as deserving of regard exactly in proportion to their likeness to ourselves. These superstitions of selfishness had the characteristics by which Dr. Whewell recognises his moral rules; and his opinion on the rights of animals shows that in this case at least he is consistent. We are perfectly willing to stake the whole question on this one issue. Granted that any practice causes more pain to animals than it gives pleasure to man; is that practice moral or immoral? And if, exactly in proportion as human beings raise their heads out of the slough of selfishness, they do not with one voice answer 'immoral,' let the morality of the principle of utility be for ever condemned.

There cannot be a fitter transition than this subject affords, from the Benthamic standard of ethics to that of Dr. Whewell. It is not enough to object to the morality of utility. It is necessary also to show that there is another and a better morality. This is what Dr. Whewell proposes to himself in his Introductory Lecture, and in the whole of his previous work, 'Elements of Morality.' We shall now, therefore, proceed to examine Dr. Whewell's achievements as the constructor of a scientific foundation for the theory of morals.

'The moral rule of human action,' Dr. Whewell says, is that 'we must do what is right.' ('Lectures,' p. xi.) Here, at all events, is a safe proposition; since to deny it would be a contradiction in terms. But what is meant by 'right?' According to Dr. Whewell, 'what we must do.' This, he says, is the very definition of right.

'The definition of *rightful*, or of the adjective *right*, is, I

conceive, contained in the maxim which I have already quoted as proceeding from the general voice of mankind: namely this, that we must do what is right at whatever cost. That an action is right, is a reason for doing it, which is paramount to all other reasons, and overweighs them all when they are on the contrary side. It is painful; but it is right: therefore we must do it. It is a loss; but it is right: therefore we must do it. It is unkind; but it is right: therefore we must do it. These are self-evident' [he might have said identical] 'propositions. That a thing is right, is a *supreme* reason for doing it. *Right* implies this supreme, unconquerable reason; and does this especially and exclusively. No other word does imply such an irresistible cogency in its effect, except in so far as it involves the same notion. What we *ought* to do, what we *should* do, that we *must* do, though it bring pain and loss. But why? *Because* it is *right*. The expressions all run together in their meaning. And this *supreme* rule, that we must do what is right, is also the *moral* rule of human action.'—(pp. x. xi.)

Right means that which we *must* do, and the rule of action is, that we must do what is right; that we must do that which we must do. This we will call vicious circle the first. But let us not press hardly on Dr. Whewell at this stage; perhaps he only means that the foundation of morals is the conviction that there is *something* which we must do at all risks; and he admits that we have still to find what this something is. 'What *is* right; what it is that we ought to do, we must have some means of determining, in order to complete our moral scheme.' (p. xi.)

Attempting then to pick out Dr. Whewell's leading propositions, and exhibit them in connexion, we find, first, that 'the supreme rule of human action, Rightness,' ought to control the desires and affections, or otherwise that these are 'to be regulated so that they

may be right.' (xii. xiii.) This does not help towards showing what *is* right.

But secondly, we come to a 'condition which is obviously requisite.' In order that the desires and affections which relate to 'other men' may be right, 'they must conform to this primary and universal condition, that they do not violate the *rights* of others. This condition may not be sufficient, but it is necessary.' (p. xiii.)

This promises something. In tracing to its elements the idea of Right, the adjective, we are led to the prior, and it is to be presumed more elementary idea, of Rights, the substantive. But now, what are rights? and how came they to be rights?

Before answering these questions, Dr. Whewell gives a classification of rights 'commonly recognised among men.' He says, they are of five sorts, 'those of person, property, family, state, and contract.' (xv.) But how do we discover that they are rights? and what is meant by calling them rights? Much to our surprise, Dr. Whewell refers us, on both these points, to the law. And he asks, 'in what manner do we rise from mere legal rights to moral rightness?' and replies, 'we do so in virtue of this principle: that the supreme rule of man's actions must be a rule which has authority over the whole of man; over his intentions as well as his actions; over his affections, his desires, his habits, his thoughts, his wishes.' We must not only not violate the rights of others, but we must not desire to violate them. 'And thus we rise from legal obligation to moral duty; from legality to virtue; from blamelessness in the forum of man to innocence in the court of conscience.'

And this Dr. Whewell actually gives as his scheme of morality. His rule of right is, to infringe no rights conferred by the law, and to cherish no dispositions which could make us desire such infringements! According to this, the early Christians, the religious reformers, the founders of all free governments, Clarkson, Wilberforce, and all enemies of the rights of slaveowners, must be classed among the wicked. If this is Dr. Whewell's morality, it is the very Hobbism which he reprobates, and this in its worst sense. But though Dr. Whewell says that this is his morality, he presently unsays it.

'Our morality is not derived from the special commands of existing laws, but from the fact that laws exist, and from our classification of their subjects. Personal safety, property, contracts, family and civil relations, are everywhere the subjects of law, and are everywhere protected by law; therefore we judge that these things must be the subjects of morality, and must be reverently regarded by morality. But we are not thus bound to approve of all the special appointments with regard to those subjects, which may exist at a given time in the laws of a given country. On the contrary, we may condemn the laws as being contrary to morality. We cannot frame a morality without recognising property, and property exists through law; but yet the law of property, in a particular country, may be at variance with that moral purpose for which, in our eyes, laws exist. Law is the foundation and necessary condition of justice; but yet laws may be unjust, and when unjust ought to be changed.'—(p. xvii.)

The practical enormities consequent on Dr. Whewell's theory are thus got rid of; but when these are gone, there is nothing of the theory left. He undertook to explain how we may know what is right. It appeared at first, that he was about to give a crite-

rion, when he said that it is not right to violate legal rights. According to this, when we want to know what is right, we have to consult the law, and see what rights it recognises. But now it seems that these rights may be contrary to right; and all we can be sure of is, that it is right there should be rights of some sort. And we learn that, after all, it is for a 'moral purpose' that in Dr. Whewell's opinion 'laws exist.' So that while the meaning of *ought* is that we ought to respect rights, it is a previous condition that these rights must be such as *ought* to be respected. Morality must conform to law, but law must first conform to morality. This is vicious circle the second. Dr. Whewell has broken out of the first; he has made, this time, a larger sweep; the curve he describes is wider, but it still returns into itself.

An adherent of 'dependent morality' would say that, instead of deriving right from rights, we must have a rule of right before it can be decided what ought to be rights; and that, both in law and in morals, the rights which ought to exist are those which for the general happiness it is expedient should exist. And Dr. Whewell anticipates that some one may even do him what he thinks the injustice of supposing this to be his opinion. He introduces an objector as saying, 'that by making our morality begin from rights, we really do found it upon expediency, notwithstanding our condemnation of systems so founded. For, it may be said, rights such as property exist only because they are expedient.' Dr. Whewell hastens to repel this imputation; and here is his theory. 'We reply as before, that rights are

founded on the whole nature of man, in such a way that he cannot have a human existence without them. He is a moral being, and must have rights, *because morality cannot exist where rights are not.*' Was ever an unfortunate metaphysician driven into such a corner? We wanted to know what morality is, and Dr. Whewell said that it is conforming to rights. We ask how he knows that there are rights, and he answers, because otherwise there could be no morality. This is vicious circle the third, and the most wonderful of the three. The Indians placed their elephant on the back of a tortoise, but they did not at the same time place the tortoise on the back of the elephant.

Dr. Whewell has failed in what it was impossible to succeed in. Every attempt to dress up an appeal to intuition in the forms of reasoning, must break down in the same manner. The system must, from the conditions of the case, revolve in a circle. If morality is not to gravitate to any end, but to hang self-balanced in space, it is useless attempting to suspend one point of it upon another point. The fact of moral rules supposes a certain assemblage of ideas. It is to no purpose detaching these ideas one from another, and saying that one of them must exist because another does. Press the moralist a step farther, and he can only say that the other must exist because of the first. The house must have a centre because it has wings, and wings because it has a centre. But the question was about the whole house, and how it comes to exist. It would be much simpler to say plainly, that it exists because it exists. This is what Dr. Whewell is in the end obliged to come

to; and he would have saved himself a great deal of bad logic, if he had begun with it.*

So much as to the existence of moral rules: now as to what they are.

'We do not rest our rules of action upon the tendency of actions to produce the happiness of others, or of mankind in general; because we cannot solve a problem so difficult as to determine which of two courses of action will produce the greatest amount of human happiness: and we see a simpler and far more satisfactory mode of deducing such rules; namely, by considering that there must be such rules; that they must be rules for man; for man living among men; and for the whole of man's being. Since we are thus led directly to moral rules, by the consideration of the internal condition of man's being, we cannot think it wise to turn away from this method, and to try to determine such rules by reference to an obscure and unmanageable external condition, the amount of happiness produced.'—(p. xx.)

If these were not Dr. Whewell's own words, we should expect to be charged, as he charges Bentham, with caricature. This is given as a scientific statement of the proper mode of discovering what are the rules of morality! We are to 'deduce such rules' from four considerations. First, 'that there must be such rules;' a necessary preliminary, certainly. If

* In Dr. Whewell's larger work, we find him resorting, after all, to an 'external object' as the ultimate ground for acknowledging any moral rules whatever. He there says, that 'the reason for doing what is absolutely right, is that it is the Will of God, through whom the condition and destination of mankind are what they are.'—(Elements, i. 225.) In the Lectures, however, he admits that this renders nugatory the ascribing any moral attributes to God. 'If we make holiness, justice, and purity, the mere result of God's commands, we can no longer find any force in the declaration that God is holy, just, and pure; since the assertion then becomes merely an empty identical proposition.'—(p. 58.) We hope that this indicates a change of opinion since the publication of the earlier work.

we are to build a wall, it is because it has been previously decided that there must be a wall. But we must know what the wall is for; what end it is intended to serve; or we shall not know what sort of wall is required. What end are moral rules intended to serve? No end, according to Dr. Whewell. They do not exist for the sake of an end. To have them is part of man's nature, like (it is Dr. Whewell's own illustration) the circulation of the blood. It is now then to be inquired *what* rules are part of our nature. This is to be discovered from three things: that they must be 'rules for man; for man living among men; and for the whole of man's being.' This is only saying over again, in a greater number of words, what we want, not how we are to find it. First, they must be 'rules for man;' but we are warned not to suppose that this means for man's benefit; it only means that they are for man to obey. This leaves us exactly where we were before. Next, they are for 'man living among men,' that is, for the conduct of man to men: but *how* is man to conduct himself to men? Thirdly, they are 'for the whole of man's being;' that is, according to Dr. Whewell's explanation, they are for the regulation of our desires as well as of our actions; but what we wanted to know was, *how* we are to regulate our desires and our actions? Of the four propositions given as premises from which all moral rules are to be deduced, not one points to any difference between one kind of moral rules and another. Whether the rule is to love or to hate our neighbour, it will equally answer all Dr. Whewell's conditions: These are the premises which are more 'simple and satisfactory' than such 'obscure and unmanageable'

propositions, so utterly impossible to be assured of, as that some actions are favourable, and others injurious, to human happiness! Try a parallel case. Let it be required to find the principles of the art of navigation. Bentham says, we must look to an 'external end;' getting from place to place on the water. No, says Dr. Whewell, there is a 'simpler and more satisfactory' mode, viz. to consider that there must be such an art; that it must be for a ship; for a ship at sea; and for all the parts of a ship. Would Dr. Whewell prevail on any one to suppose that these considerations made it unnecessary to consider, with Bentham, what a ship is intended to do?

This account is all we get from Dr. Whewell, in the Lectures, of the mode of discovering and recognising the rules of morality. But perhaps he succeeds better in doing the thing, than in explaining how it ought to be done. At all events, having written two volumes of 'Elements of Morality,' he must have performed this feat, either well or ill; he must have found a way of 'deducing moral rules.' We will now, therefore, dismiss Dr. Whewell's generalities, and try to estimate his method, not by what he says about it, but by what we see him doing when he carries it into practice.

We turn, then, to his 'Elements of Morality,' and to the third chapter of that work, which is entitled, 'Moral Rules exist necessarily.' And here we at once find something well calculated to surprise us. That moral rules must exist, was, it may be remembered, the first of Dr. Whewell's four fundamental axioms; and has been presented hitherto as a law of human nature, requiring no proof. It must puzzle

some of his pupils to find him here proving it; and still more, to find him proving it from utility.

'In enumerating and describing, as we have done, certain desires as among the most powerful springs of human action, we have stated that man's life is scarcely tolerable if these desires are not in some degree gratified; that man cannot be at all satisfied without some security in such gratification; that without property, which gratifies one of these desires, man's free agency cannot exist; that without marriage, which gratifies another, there can be no peace, comfort, tranquillity, or order. And the same may be said of all those springs of actions which we enumerated as mental desires. Without some provision for the tranquil gratification of these desires, society is disturbed, unbalanced, painful. The gratification of such desires must be a part of the order of the society. There must be rules which direct the course and limits of such gratification. Such rules are necessary for the peace of society.'—('Elements,' i. 32.)

This is a very different mode of treating the subject from that which we observed in the Lectures. We are now among reasons: good or bad they may be, but still reasons. Moral rules are here spoken of as means to an end. We now hear of the peace and comfort of society; of making man's life tolerable; of the satisfaction and gratification of human beings; of preventing a disturbed and painful state of society. This is utility—this is pleasure and pain. When real reasons are wanted, the repudiated happiness-principle is always the resource. It is true, this is soon followed by a recurrence to the old topics, of the necessity of rules 'for the action of man as man,' and the impossibility to 'conceive man as man without conceiving him as subject to rules.' But any meaning it is possible to find in these phrases (which is not

much) is all reflected from the utilitarian reasons given just before. Rules are necessary, because mankind would have no security for any of the things which they value, for anything which gives them pleasure or shields them from pain, unless they could rely on one another for doing, and in particular for abstaining from, certain acts. And it is true, that man could not be conceived 'as man,' that is, with the average human intelligence, if he were unable to perceive so obvious an utility.

Almost all the *generalia* of moral philosophy prefixed to the 'Elements' are in like manner derived from utility. For example: that the desires, until subjected to general rules, bring mankind into conflict and opposition; but that, when general rules are established, the feelings which gather round these 'are sources not of opposition, but of agreement;' that they 'tend to make men unanimous; and that such rules with regard to the affections and desires as tend to control the repulsive and confirm the attractive forces which operate in human society; such as tend to unite men, to establish concord, unanimity, sympathy, agree with that which is the character of moral rules.' (i. 35.) This is Benthamism—even approaching to Fourierism.

And again, in attempting a classification and definition of virtues, and a parallel one of duties corresponding to them. The definitions of both the one and the other are deduced from utility. After classing virtues under the several heads of benevolence, justice, truth, purity, and order, Benevolence is defined as 'desire of the good of all men;' and in a wider sense, as the 'absence of all the affections which

tend to separate men, and the aggregate of the affections which unite them.' (i. 137-8.) Justice, as 'the desire that each person should have his own.' (p. 138.) Truth is defined 'an agreement of the verbal expression with the thought,' and is declared to be a duty because 'lying and deceit tend to separate and disunite men, and to make all actions implying mutual dependence, that is, all social action and social life, impossible.' (pp. 138-9.) Purity is defined 'the control of the appetites by the moral sentiments and the reason.' Order, as a conformity of our internal dispositions to the laws and to moral rules (why not rather to good laws, and good moral rules?) All these definitions, though very open to criticism in detail, are in principle utilitarian.* Though Dr. Whewell will not recognise the promotion of happiness as the ultimate principle, he deduces his secondary principles from it, and supports his propositions by utilitarian reasons as far as they will go. He is chiefly distinguished from utilitarian moralists of the more superficial kind, by this, that he ekes out his appeals to utility with appeals to 'our idea of man as

* The enumeration of duties does not always follow accurately the definition of the corresponding virtues. For example, the definition of purity is one which suits temperance, 'the control of the appetites by the moral sentiments and the reason:' but the scheme of duties set forth under this head is rather as if the definition had been 'the conformity of the appetites to the moral opinions and customs of the country.' It is remarkable that a writer who uses the word purity so much out of its common meaning as to make it synonymous with temperance, should charge Bentham, ('Lectures,' p. 208,) because he employs the word in another of its acknowledged senses, with arbitrarily altering its signification. Bentham understands by the purity of a pleasure, its freedom from admixture of pain: as we speak of pure gold, pure water, pure truth, of things purely beneficial or purely mischievous: meaning, in each case, freedom from alloy with any other ingredient.

man;' and when reasons fail, or are not sufficiently convincing, then 'all men think,' or 'we cannot help feeling,' serves as a last resort, and closes the discussion.

Of this hybrid character is the ethics of Dr. Whewell's 'Elements of Morality.' And in this he resembles all other writers of the intuitive school of morals. They are none of them frankly and consistently intuitive. To use a happy expression of Bentham in a different case, they draw from a double fountain—utility, and internal conviction; the tendencies of actions, and the feelings with which mankind regard them. This is not a matter of choice with these writers, but of necessity. It arises from the nature of the morality of internal conviction. Utility, as a standard, is capable of being carried out singly and consistently; a moralist can deduce from it his whole system of ethics, without calling to his assistance any foreign principle. It is not so with one who relies on moral intuition; for where will he find his moral intuitions? How many ethical propositions can be enumerated, of which the most reckless assertor will venture to affirm that they have the adhesion of all mankind? Dr. Whewell declares unhesitatingly that the moral judgment of mankind, when it is unanimous, must be right. 'What are universally held as virtues, must be dispositions in conformity with this [the supreme] law: what are universally reckoned vices, must be wrong.' This is saying much, when we consider the worth, in other matters nearly allied to these, of what is complimentarily called the general opinion of mankind; when we remember what grovelling superstitions, what witch-

craft, magic, astrology, what oracles, ghosts, what gods and demons scattered through all nature, were once universally believed in, and still are so by the majority of the human race. But where are these unanimously recognised vices and virtues to be found? Practices the most revolting to the moral feelings of some ages and nations do not incur the smallest censure from others; and it is doubtful whether there is a single virtue which is held to be a virtue by all nations, in the same sense, and with the same reservations. There are, indeed, some moralities of an utility so unmistakeable, so obviously indispensable to the common purposes of life, that as general rules mankind could no more differ about them than about the multiplication table; but even here, there is the widest difference of sentiment about the exceptions. The universal voice of mankind, so often appealed to, is universal only in its discordance. What passes for it is merely the voice of the majority, or, failing that, of any large number having a strong feeling on the subject; especially if it be a feeling of which they cannot give any account, and which, as it is not consciously grounded on any reasons, is supposed to be better than reasons, and of higher authority. With Dr. Whewell, a strong feeling, shared by most of those whom he thinks worth counting, is always an *ultima ratio* from which there is no appeal. He forgets that as much might have been pleaded, and in many cases might still be pleaded, in defence of the absurdest superstitions.

It seems to be tacitly supposed that however liable mankind are to be wrong in their opinions, they are generally right in their feelings, and especially in

their antipathies. On the contrary, there is nothing which it is more imperative that they should be required to justify by reasons. The antipathies of mankind are mostly derived from three sources. One of these is an impression, true or false, of utility. They dislike what is painful or dangerous, or what is apparently so. These antipathies, being grounded on the happiness principle, must be required to justify themselves by it. The second class of antipathies are against what they are taught, or imagine, to be displeasing to some visible or invisible power, capable of doing them harm, and whose wrath, once kindled, may be wreaked on those who tolerated, as well as on those who committed, the offence. The third kind of antipathies, often as strong as either of the others, are directed towards mere differences of opinion, or of taste. Any of the three, when nourished by education, and deriving confidence from mutual encouragement, assumes to common minds the character of a moral feeling. But to pretend that any such antipathy, were it ever so general, gives the smallest guarantee of its own justice and reasonableness, or has any claim to be binding on those who do not partake in the sentiment, is as irrational as to adduce the belief in ghosts or witches as a proof of their real existence. I am not bound to abstain from an action because another person dislikes it, however he may dignify his dislike with the name of disapprobation.

We cannot take leave of Dr. Whewell's strictures on Bentham, without adverting to some observations made by him on Bentham's character as a jurist rather than as a moralist. In this capacity Dr. Whewell does more justice to Bentham, than in the

department of moral philosophy. But he finds fault with him for two things: first, for not sufficiently recognising what Dr. Whewell calls the historical element of legislation; and imagining 'that to a certain extent his schemes of law might be made independent of local conditions.' Dr. Whewell admits it to be part of Bentham's doctrine, that different countries must to a certain extent have different laws; and is aware that he wrote an 'Essay on the Influence of Time and Place in Matters of Legislation;' but thinks him wrong in maintaining that there should be a general plan, of which the details only should be modified by local circumstances; and contends, that different countries require different ground-plans of legislation.

'There is in every national code of law a necessary and fundamental historical element; not a few supplementary provisions which may be added or adapted to the local circumstances after the great body of the code has been constructed: not a few touches of local colouring to be put in after the picture is almost painted: but an element which belongs to law from its origin, and penetrates to its roots: a part of the intimate structure; a cast in the original design. The national views of personal status; property, and the modes of acquisition; bargains, and the modes of concluding them; family, and its consequences; government, and its origin; these affect even the most universal aspects and divisions of penal offences; these affect still more every step of the expository process which the civil law applies to rights in defining penal offences.'—('Lectures,' p. 254.)

What Dr. Whewell designates by the obscure and misleading expression, 'an historical element,' and accuses Bentham of paying too little regard to, is the existing opinions and feelings of the people. These

may, without doubt, in some sense be called historical, as being partly the product of their previous history; but whatever attention is due to those opinions and feelings in legislation, is due to them not as matter of history, but as social forces in present being. Now Bentham, in common with all other rational persons, admitted that a legislator is obliged to have regard to the opinions and feelings of the people to be legislated for; but with this difference, that he did not look upon those opinions and feelings as affecting, in any great degree, what was desirable to be done, but only what could be done. Take one of Dr. Whewell's instances, 'the national views of personal status.' The 'national views' may regard slavery as a legitimate condition of human beings, and Mr. Livingstone, in legislating for Louisiana, may have been obliged to recognise slavery as a fact, and to make provision for it, and for its consequences, in his code of laws; but he was bound to regard the equality of human beings as the foundation of his legislation, and the concession to the 'historical element' as a matter of temporary expediency; and while yielding to the necessity, to endeavour, by all the means in his power, to educate the nation into better things. And so of the other subjects mentioned by Dr. Whewell—property, contracts, family, and government. The fact that, in any of these matters, a people prefer some particular mode of legislation, on historical grounds—that is, because they have been long used to it,—is no proof of any original adaptation in it to their nature or circumstances, and goes a very little way in recommendation of it as for their benefit now. But it may be a very important element in deter-

mining what the legislator can do, and still more, the manner in which he should do it: and in both these respects Bentham allowed it full weight. What he is at issue with Dr. Whewell upon, is in deeming it right for the legislator to keep before his mind an ideal of what he would do if the people for whom he made laws were entirely devoid of prejudice or accidental prepossession: while Dr. Whewell, by placing their prejudices and accidental prepossessions 'at the basis of the system,' enjoins legislation not in simple recognition of existing popular feelings, but in obedience to them.

The other objection made by Dr. Whewell to Bentham as a writer on legislation, (for we omit the criticism on his classification of offences, as too much a matter of detail for the present discussion,) is that he does not fully recognise 'the moral object of law' (p. 257). Dr. Whewell says, in phraseology which we considerably abridge, that law ought not only to preserve and gratify man, but to improve and teach him: not only to take care of him as an animal, but to raise him to a moral life. Punishment, therefore, he says, 'is to be, not merely a means of preventing suffering, but is also to be a moral lesson.' But Bentham, as Dr. Whewell is presently forced to admit, says the same: and in fact carries this doctrine so far, as to maintain that legal punishment ought sometimes to be attached to acts for the mere purpose of stigmatizing them, and turning the popular sentiment against them. No one, more than Bentham, recognises that most important, but most neglected, function of the legislator, the office of an instructor, both moral and intellectual. But he receives no credit for

this from Dr. Whewell, except that of being false to his principles; for Dr. Whewell seems to reckon it an impertinence in anybody to recognise morality as a good, who thinks, as Bentham does, that it is a means to an end. If any one who believes that the moral sentiments should be guided by the happiness of mankind, proposes that moral sentiments, so guided, should be cultivated and fostered, Dr. Whewell treats this as a deserting of utilitarian principles, and borrowing or stealing from his.

As an example of 'Bentham's attempt to exclude morality, as such, in his legislation,' Dr. Whewell refers to 'what he says respecting the laws of marriage, and especially in favour of a liberty of divorce by common consent.' As this is the only opportunity Dr. Whewell gives his readers, of comparing his mode of discussing a specific moral question with Bentham's, we shall devote a few words to it.

Having quoted from Bentham the observation that a government which interdicts divorce 'takes upon itself to decide that it understands the interests of individuals better than they do themselves,' Dr. Whewell answers, that this is an objection to all laws: that in many other cases, 'government, both in its legislation and administration, does assume that it understands the interests of individuals, *and the public interest as affected by them*, better than they do themselves.' The words which we have put in italics, adroitly change the question. Government is entitled to assume that it will take better care than individuals of the public interest, but not better care of their own interest. It is one thing for the legislator to dictate to individuals what they shall do for their

own advantage, and another thing to protect the interest of other persons who may be injuriously affected by their acts. Dr. Whewell's own instances suffice: 'What is the meaning of restraints imposed for the sake of public health, cleanliness, and comfort? Why are not individuals left to do what they like with reference to such matters? Plainly because carelessness, ignorance, indolence, would prevent their doing what is most for their own interest.'—(p. 258.) Say rather, would lead them to do what is contrary to the interest of other people. The proper object of sanitary laws is not to compel people to take care of their own health, but to prevent them from endangering that of others. To prescribe by law, what they should do for their own health alone, would by most people be justly regarded as something very like tyranny.

Dr. Whewell continues:—

'But is Mr. Bentham ready to apply consistently the principle which he thus implies, that in such matters individuals are the best judges of their own interests? Will he allow divorce to take place whenever the two parties agree in desiring it? . . . Such a facility of divorce as this, leaves hardly any difference possible between marriage and concubinage. If a pair may separate when they please, why does the legislator take the trouble to recognise their living together?'

Apply this to other cases. If a man can pay his tailor when he and his tailor choose, why does the law take the trouble to recognise them as debtor and creditor? Why recognise, as partners in business, as landlords and tenants, as servants and employers, people who are not tied to each other for life?

Dr. Whewell finds what he thinks an inconsistency

in Bentham's view of the subject. He thus describes Bentham's opinions.

'Marriage for life is, he [Bentham] says, the most natural marriage: if there were no laws except the ordinary law of contracts, this would be the most ordinary arrangement. So far, good. But Mr. Bentham, having carried his argument so far, does not go on with it. What conclusion are we to suppose him to intend? This arrangement would be very *general* without law, therefore the legislator should pass a law to make it *universal*? . . . No. The very next sentence is employed in showing the absurdity of making the engagement one from which the parties cannot liberate themselves by mutual consent. And there is no attempt to reduce these arguments, or their results, to a consistency.'—(p. 259.)

Dr. Whewell's ideas of inconsistency seem to be peculiar. Bentham, he says, is of opinion, that in the majority of cases it is best for the happiness of married persons that they should remain together. Is it so? (says Dr. Whewell)—then why not force them to remain together, even when it would be best for their happiness to separate?

Try again parallel cases. In choosing a profession, a sensible person will fix on one in which he will find it agreeable to remain; therefore, it should not be lawful to change a profession once chosen. A landlord, when he has a good tenant, best consults his own interest by not changing him; therefore, all tenancy should be for life. Electors who have found a good representative will probably do wisely in re-electing him; therefore, members of parliament should be irremovable.

Dr. Whewell intended to show into what errors Bentham was led, by treating the question of mar-

riage apart from 'moral grounds.' Yet part of his complaint is that Bentham does consider moral grounds, which, according to Dr. Whewell, he has no right to do. If one married person maltreats the other to procure consent to a divorce,—

'Bentham's decision is, that liberty should be allowed to the party maltreated and not to the other. . . . Now to this decision I have nothing to object: but I must remark, that the view which makes it tolerable is, its being a decision on moral grounds, such as Mr. Bentham would not willingly acknowledge. The man may not take advantage of his own wrong: *that* is a maxim which quite satisfies *us*. But Mr. Bentham, who only regards wrong as harm, would, I think, find it difficult to satisfy the man that he was fairly used.'

Mr. Bentham would have found it difficult to conceive that any one attempting to criticise his philosophy could know so little of its elements. Dr. Whewell wonders what the reason can be, on Bentham's principles, for not allowing a man to benefit by his own wrong. Did it never occur to him, that it is to take away from the man his inducement to commit the wrong?

Finally, Dr. Whewell says, 'No good rule can be established on this subject without regarding the marriage union in a moral point of view; without assuming it as one great object of the law to elevate and purify men's idea of marriage; to lead them to look upon it as an entire union of interests and feelings, enjoyments and hopes, between the two parties.' We cannot agree in the doctrine that it should be an object of the law to 'lead men to look upon' marriage as being what it is not. Neither Bentham nor any one who thinks with him would deny that this

entire union is the completest ideal of marriage; but it is bad philosophy to speak of a relation as if it always *was* the best thing that it possibly can be, and then infer that when it is notoriously not such, as in an immense majority of cases, and even when it is the extreme contrary, as in a considerable minority, it should nevertheless be treated exactly as if the fact corresponded with the theory. The liberty of divorce is contended for, because marriages are not what Dr. Whewell says they should be looked upon as being; because a choice made by an inexperienced person, and not allowed to be corrected, cannot, except by a happy accident, realize the conditions essential to this complete union.

We give these observations not as a discussion of the question, but of Dr. Whewell's treatment of it; as part of the comparison which he invites his readers to institute between his method and that of Bentham. Were it our object to confirm the general character we have given of Dr. Whewell's philosophy, by a survey in detail of the morality laid down by him, the two volumes of 'Elements' afford abundant materials. We could show that Dr. Whewell not only makes no improvement on the old moral doctrines, but attempts to set up afresh several of them which have been loosened or thrown down by the stream of human progress.

Thus we find him everywhere inculcating, as one of the most sacred duties, reverence for superiors, even when personally undeserving (i. 176-7), and obedience to existing laws, even when bad. 'The laws of the state are to be observed even when they enact slavery.'—(i. 351.) 'The morality of the indi-

vidual,' he says, (i. 58), 'depends on his not violating the law of his nation.' It is not even the spirit of the law, but the letter (i. 213), to which obedience is due. The law, indeed, is accepted by Dr. Whewell as the fountain of rights; of those rights which it is the primary moral duty not to infringe. And mere custom is of almost equal authority with express enactment. Even in a matter so personal as marriage, the usage and practice of the country is to be a paramount law. 'In some countries, the marriage of the child is a matter usually managed by the parents; in such cases, it is the child's duty to bring the affections, as far as possible, into harmony with the custom.'—(i. 211.) 'Reverence and affection' towards 'the constitution of each country,' he holds (ii. 204) as 'one of the duties of a citizen.'

Again, Dr. Whewell affirms, with a directness not usually ventured on in these days by persons of his standing and importance, that to disbelieve either a providential government of the world, or revelation, is morally criminal; for that 'men are blameable in disbelieving truths after they have been promulgated, though they are ignorant without blame before the promulgation.'—(ii. 91—94.) This is the very essence of religious intolerance, aggravated by the fact, that among the persons thus morally stigmatized are notoriously included many of the best men who ever lived. He goes still further, and lays down the principle of intolerance in its broad generality, saying, that 'the man who holds false opinions' is morally condemnable 'when he has had the means of knowing the truth' (ii. 102); that it is 'his duty to think rationally,' (*i.e.* to think the same as Dr. Whewell):

that it is to no purpose his saying that he has done all he could to arrive at truth, since a man has never done *all he can* to arrive at truth.'—(ii. 106.) If a man has never done all he can, neither has his judge done all he can; and the heretic may have more grounds for believing his opinion true, than the judge has for affirming it to be false. But the judge is on the side of received opinions, which, according to Dr. Whewell's standard, makes all right.

It is not, however, our object to criticise Dr. Whewell as a teacher of the details of morality. Our design goes no farther than to illustrate his controversy with Bentham respecting its first principle. It may, perhaps, be thought that Dr. Whewell's arguments against the philosophy of utility are too feeble to require so long a refutation. But feeble arguments easily pass for convincing, when they are on the same side as the prevailing sentiment; and readers in general are so little acquainted with that or any other system of moral philosophy, that they take the word of anybody, especially an author in repute, who professes to inform them what it is; and suppose that a doctrine must be indeed absurd, to which mere truisms are offered as a sufficient reply. It was, therefore, not unimportant to show, by a minute examination, that Dr. Whewell has misunderstood and misrepresented the philosophy of utility, and that his attempts to refute it, and to construct a moral philosophy without it, have been equally failures.

GROTE'S HISTORY OF GREECE.*

VOLS. IX. X. XI.

IN his eighth volume, Mr. Grote brought the narrative of Grecian History to its great turning point—the subjugation of Athens by the Spartans and their confederates; including, as the immediate sequel of that event, the sanguinary tyranny of the Thirty—the rapid reaction in Grecian feeling—the return of the exiles under Thrasybulus, subsequently known at Athens by the designation of 'those from Phyle' or 'those from Piræus'—the restoration of Athens, under the tolerance of Sparta, to internal freedom though denuded of empire, and the inauguration of a new era of concord by the healing measures which made the archonship of Euclides memorable to succeeding generations. The recital of these stirring events was immediately followed by those admirable chapters on the Sophists and on Socrates, which may be pronounced the most important portion yet written of this History; whether we consider the intrinsic interest of their subjects—the deep-rooted historical errors which they tend to dispel—or the great permanent instruction contained in their display of the characteristics of one of the most eminent men who

* *Edinburgh Review*, October 1853. *Vide supra* (p. 283) the review of the first and second volumes. The articles in the *Edinburgh Review* on the intermediate volumes of Mr. Grote's History were not written by the author. Some passages from shorter notices of those volumes, published as they successively appeared, have been incorporated with the following article.

ever lived—a man unique in history, of a kind at all times needful, and seldom more needed than now.*

The three volumes which we have here to notice contain no delineations belonging to the same elevated rank with that which closed so impressively the volume immediately preceding. The exposition and estimate of Plato, which alone would have afforded similar opportunities, though falling within the chro-

* We have not space to give the smallest specimen of the delineation of this remarkable character, now brought into clearer light than ever before—a philosopher inculcating, under a supposed religious impulse, pure reason and a rigid discipline of the logical faculty. But we invite attention to the estimate, contained in this chapter, of the peculiarities of the Socratic teaching, and of the urgent need, at the present and at all times, of such a teacher. Socrates, in morals, is conceived by Mr. Grote as the parallel of Bacon in physics. He exposed the loose, vague, confused, and misleading character of the common notions of mankind on the most familiar subjects. By apt interrogations, forcing the interlocutors to become conscious of the want of precision in their own ideas, he showed that the words in popular use on all moral subjects (words which, because they are familiar, all persons fancy they understand) in reality answer to no distinct and well-defined ideas; and that the common notions, which those words serve to express, all require to be reconsidered. This is exactly what Bacon showed to be the case with respect to the phrases and notions commonly current on physical subjects. It is the fashion of the present day to decry negative dialectics; as if making men conscious of their ignorance were not the first step—and an absolutely necessary one—towards inducing them to acquire knowledge. 'Opinio copiæ,' says Bacon, 'maxima causa inopiæ est.' The war which Bacon made upon confused general ideas, 'notiones temere a rebus abstractas,' was essentially negative, but it constituted the epoch from which alone advancement in positive knowledge became possible. It is to Bacon that we owe Newton, and the modern physical science. In like manner Socrates, by convincing men of their ignorance, and pointing out the conditions of knowledge, originated the positive movement which produced Plato and Aristotle. With them and their immediate disciples that movement ceased, and has never yet been so effectually revived as to be permanent. The common notions of the present time on moral and mental subjects are as incapable of supporting the Socratic cross-examination as those of his own age: they are, just as much, the wild fruits of the undisciplined understanding—of the 'intellectus sibi permissus,' as Bacon phrases it; rough generalizations of first impressions, or consecrations of accidental feelings, without due analysis or mental circumscription.

nological period comprised in the eleventh volume, is not included in it, but reserved for one yet to come; except in so far as the philosopher is personally involved in the series of Sicilian transactions, through his connexion with Dion, whose remarkable, and eminently tragic character and career form the centre of interest in the most striking chapter of these volumes. There is little scope in this portion of the work for bringing prominently forward any great ethical or philosophical ideas; and the illustrations it contains of Grecian character and institutions relate principally to points which the author had largely illustrated before. In no other part of the book is the continuity of the narrative so little broken by dissertation or discussion; but in the rapid succession of animating incidents, and the living display of interesting individual characters, these volumes are not inferior to any of the preceding.

They commence with the expedition of Cyrus, and the retreat of Xenophon and the Ten Thousand: an episode fertile in exemplifications of Grecian and of Asiatic characteristics, and especially valuable as being the only detailed account of the personal adventures of any body of Greeks, or even of any individual Greek, which has been directly transmitted to us by an eye-witness and actor. Next follows the history of the short-lived Lacedæmonian ascendancy; its deplorable abuse, and the conspicuous Nemesis which fell on that selfish and domineering community, by the irreparable prostration of her power through the arms of Thebes, so many years the firm ally of Sparta, and for her treacherous conduct to whom, even more than for any other of her misdeeds, she, in the

general opinion of Greece, deserved her fate. The chapters which describe this contest, relate also the resurrection of Athens, and her reattainment, in diminished measure and for a brief period, of something like imperial dignity. At this halting-place Mr. Grote suspends the main course of his narrative, and takes up the thread of the history of the Sicilian Greeks; the most interesting part of whose story is included in the present volumes. He illustrates, by the conduct and fortunes of the elder Dionysius, the successive stages of the 'despot's progress.' Here, too, the avenging Nemesis attends; but, as usual with the misdeeds of rulers, the punishment is vicarious. The younger Dionysius, a weak and self-indulgent, but good-natured and rather well-meaning inheritor of despotic power, suffered the penalty of the usurpation and the multiplied tyrannies of his energetic and unscrupulous father. The decline and fall of the Dionysian dynasty, and the restoration of Sicilian freedom, are related by Mr. Grote in his best style of ethical narrative, and with a biographical interest equal to the historical. For, as the chapters on the fall of Sparta are animated and exalted by the great qualities of Epaminondas—the first of Greeks in military genius, surpassed only by Pericles in comprehensive statesmanship, yet even more honourably distinguished among Grecian politicians by the unostentatious disinterestedness of his public virtue, and the gentleness and generosity of his sentiments towards opponents; so the Sicilian chapters are lighted up, first by the high-minded but chequered, and even in his errors eminently interesting, character of Dion, and afterwards by the steadier and more unmixed

brilliancy of the real liberator of Sicily, the wise, just, and heroic Timoleon.

Last comes that gloomy period of Grecian history, the age of Philip of Macedon: during which, enfeebled by the long and destructive wars which had successively prostrated every one of her leading states, Greece fell a prey to an able and enterprising neighbour, who, at the head of a numerous population of hardy warriors implicitly obedient to his will, was enabled to turn her own military arts and discipline against herself. At the time when Philip commenced his career of aggrandisement, the only Grecian state in a condition to meet him with anything like equality of strength was Athens; still free and prosperous, but so lowered in public spirit and moral energy, that she threw away all her opportunities, and only rallied with a vigour worthy of her ancestors when it was too late to do more than perish honourably. These sad events, so far as their course can be traced through the extreme imperfection of our information, are related by Mr. Grote down to the fatal day of Chæroneia. And neither is this melancholy recital destitute of the relief afforded by the appearance on the scene of an illustrious character. Even in that age Athens possessed a man, of whom posterity has ratified the proud boast, drawn from him in self-vindication, that if there had been one such man in every state of Greece, or even in Thessaly and Arcadia alone, the attempts of Philip to reduce the Greeks to subjugation would have been frustrated. What one man, of boundless energy, far-reaching political vision, and an eloquence unmatched even at Athens, could do to save Greece from an inevitable doom, Demos-

thenes did. His life was an incessant struggle against the fatality of the time, and the weaknesses of his countrymen. And though he failed in his object, and perished with the last breath of the freedom for which he had lived, he has been rewarded by that immortal fame, which, as he reminded the Athenians in the most celebrated passage of his greatest oration, is not deserved only by the successful; and which he merited not more by his unequalled oratorical eminence, than by the fact, that not one mean, or selfish, or narrow, or ungenerous sentiment is appealed to throughout those splendid addresses, in which he strove to rouse and nerve his countrymen to the contest, or proudly mourned over its unsuccessful issue.

The Chæroneian catastrophe closes the epoch of Grecian history. Though much that is highly interesting remains, its interest is derived from other sources; the diffusion of Greek civilization through the Eastern nations by the expedition of Alexander and its consequences, and a few noble but vain efforts, against insuperable obstacles, in Greece itself, to regain a freedom and national independence irrecoverably lost. Of the period of Grecian greatness, we have now from Mr. Grote the completed history. We have the budding, the blossoming, and the decay and death. The fruits which survived—the permanent gifts bequeathed by Greece to the world, and constituting the foundation of all subsequent intellectual achievements—these he has not yet, or has only partially, characterised. But he has produced a finished picture of the political and collective life of Greece, and the distinctive characters of the form of

social existence, during and by means of which she accomplished things so far transcending what has ever elsewhere been achieved in so marvellously short a space of time. From the legislation of Solon to the field of Marathon, a hundred years of preparation; from Marathon to Chæroneia, barely a hundred and fifty years of maturity:—that century and a half is all that separates the earliest recorded prose writing from Demosthenes and Aristotle, all that lies between the first indication to the outer world of what Greece was destined to be, and her absorption by a foreign conqueror. A momentous interval, which decided for an indefinite period the question, whether the human race was to be stationary or progressive. That the former condition is far more congenial to ordinary human nature than the latter, experience unfortunately places beyond doubt; and history points out no other people in the ancient world who had any spring of unborrowed progress within themselves. We have no knowledge of any other source from which freedom and intellectual cultivation could have come, any other means by which the light never since extinguished might have been kindled, if the world had been left, without any elements of Grecian origin, to be fought for between the unlettered Romans and the priest-led and despot-governed Asiatics. The people and the period on which this depended, must be important to posterity as long as any portion of the past continues to be remembered: and by the aid of Mr. Grote, we are now enabled to see them with a clearness and accuracy, and judge them with a largeness of comprehension, never before approached.

To disparage what mankind owe to Greece, because she has not left for their imitation a perfect type of human character, nor a highly improved pattern of social institutions, would be to demand from the early youth of the human race what is far from being yet realized in its more advanced age. It would better become us to consider whether we have, in these particulars, advanced as much beyond the best Grecian model, as might with reason have been expected after more than twenty centuries; whether, having done no more than we have done with all that we have inherited from the Greeks, and all that has been since superadded to their teachings, we ought not to look up with reverent admiration to a people, who, without any of our adventitious helps, and without the stimulus of preceding example, moved forward by their native strength at so gigantic a pace, though in an earlier portion of the path. It is true, that in institutions, in manners, and even in the ideal standard of human character as existing in the best minds, there is an improvement. All the great thinkers and heroic lives, from Christ downward, would have done little for humanity, if after two thousand years no single point could be added to the type of excellence conceived by Socrates or Plato. But it is not the moral conceptions of heroes or philosophers which measure the difference between one age and another, so much as the accepted popular standard of virtuous conduct. Taking that as the criterion, and comparing the best Grecian with the best modern community, is the superiority wholly on the side of the moderns? Has there not been deterioration as well as improvement, and the former

perhaps almost as marked as the latter? There is more humanity, more mildness of manners, though this only from a comparatively recent date; the sense of moral obligation is more cosmopolitan, and depends less for its acknowledgment on the existence of some special tie. But we greatly doubt if most of the positive virtues were not better conceived, and more highly prized, by the public opinion of Greece than by that of Great Britain; while negative and passive qualities have now engrossed the chief part of the honour paid to virtue; and it may be questioned if even private duties are, on the whole, better understood, while duties to the public, unless in cases of special trust, have almost dropped out of the catalogue: that idea, so powerful in the free States of Greece, has faded into a mere rhetorical ornament.

In political and social organization, the moderns, or some of them at least, have a more unqualified superiority over the Greeks. They have succeeded in making free institutions possible in large territories; and they have learnt to live and be prosperous without slaves. The importance of these discoveries—for discoveries they were—hardly admits of being overrated. For want of the first, Greece lost her freedom, her virtue, and her very existence as a people; and slavery was the greatest blot in her institutions while she existed. It is sufficient merely to mention another great blot, the domestic and social condition of women (on which point, however, Sparta, in a degree surprising for the age, formed an honourable exception); since, in this respect, the superiority of modern nations is not so much greater as might be supposed. Even on the subject of slavery there are many, and

not inconsiderable palliations. Slavery in the ancient, as in the Oriental world, was a very different thing from American or West Indian slavery. The slaves were not a separate race, marked out to the contempt of their masters by indelible physical differences. When manumitted, they mixed on equal terms with the general community; and though, in Greece, seldom admitted, any more than other aliens, to the complete political franchise of their patron's city, they could generally become full citizens of some new colony, or be placed on the roll of some old commonwealth recruiting its numbers after a disaster. The facility with which, in these small territories, slaves could escape across the frontier, must, at the worst, have been a considerable check to ill usage. The literature of the Athenians proves that they not only cultivated, but counted on finding, moral virtues in their slaves, which is not consistent with the worst form of slavery. Neither, in Greece, did slavery produce that one of its effects by which, above all, it is an obstacle to improvement—that of making bodily labour dishonourable. Nowhere in Greece, except at Sparta, was industry, however mechanical, regarded as unworthy of a freeman, or even of a citizen; least of all at Athens, in whose proudest times a majority of the Demos consisted of free artisans. Doubtless, however, in Greece as elsewhere, slavery was an odious institution; and its inherent evils are in no way lessened by the admission, that as a temporary fact, in an early and rude state of the arts of life, it may have been, nevertheless, a great accelerator of progress. If we read history with intelligence, we are led to think concerning slavery as concerning many other bad

institutions, that the error was not so great of first introducing it, as of continuing it too long.

Though Grecian history is crowded with objects of interest, all others are eclipsed by Athens. Whatever in Greece most merits the gratitude of posterity, Athens possessed in fullest measure. If the Hellenic, nation is in history the main source and most conspicuous representative of progress, Athens may claim the same honourable position in regard to Greece itself; for all the Greek elements of progress, in their highest culmination, were united in that illustrious city. This was not the effect of an original superiority of natural endowments in the Athenian mind. In the first exuberant outpourings of Grecian genius, Athens bore no more than her share, if even so much. The many famous poets and musicians who preceded the era of Marathon, the early speculators in science and philosophy, and even the first historians, were scattered through all the divisions of the Greek name; with a preponderance on the side of the Ionians of Asia Minor, the Sicilian and Italian Greeks, and the islanders, all of whom attained prosperity much earlier, as well as lost it sooner, than the inhabitants of Continental Greece. Even Bœotia produced two poets of the first rank, Pindar and Corinna, at a time when Attica had only yet produced one.* By degrees, however, the whole intellect of Greece, except the purely

* By some oversight, Mr. Grote has passed over one whole generation of Grecian poets. He has given as full an account as the materials permit, of the earlier poets, down to the age of Alcæus and Sappho, and has spoken at some length of the dramatists, but has said nothing (except incidentally) of Pindar, Simonides, Anacreon, Bacchylides, or the two Bœotian poetesses, Myrtis and Corinna, the last of whom was five times crowned at Thebes in competition with Pindar.

practical, gravitated to Athens; until, in the maturity of Grecian culture, all the great writers, speakers, and thinkers were educated, and nearly all of them were born and passed their lives, in that centre of enlightenment. Of the other Greek states, such as were oligarchically governed contributed little or nothing, except in a military point of view, to make Greece illustrious. Even those among them which, like Sparta, were to a certain degree successful in providing for stability, did nothing for progress, further than supplying materials of study and experience to the great Athenian thinkers and their disciples. Of the other democracies, not one enjoyed the Eunomia, the unimpeded authority of law, and freedom from factious violence, which were quite as characteristic of Athens as either her liberty or her genius; and which, making life and property more secure than in any other part of the Grecian world, afforded the mental tranquillity which is also one of the conditions of high intellectual or imaginative achievement.

While Grecian history, considered philosophically, is thus almost concentrated in Athens, so also, considered æsthetically, it is an epic, of which Athens, as a collective personality, may be called the hero. The fate of Athens speaks to the imagination and sympathies like that of the Achilles or Odysseus of an heroic poem; absorbing into itself even the interest excited by the long series of eminent Athenians, who seem rather like successive phases under which Athens appears to us, than individuals independent and apart from it. Nowhere does history present to us a collective body so abounding in human nature as the

Athenian Demos. In them all the capacities, all the impulses and susceptibilities, the strength and the infirmities, of human character, stand out in large and bold proportions. There is nothing that they do not seem capable of understanding, of feeling, and of executing; nothing generous or heroic to which they might not be roused; and scarcely any act of folly, injustice, or ferocity into which they could not be hurried, when no honest and able adviser was at hand to recal them to their better nature. Ever variable, according to the character of the leading minister of the time; alike prudent and enterprising under the guidance of a Pericles; carelessly inert or rashly ambitious when their most influential politicians were a Nicias and an Alcibiades; yet never abdicating their own guidance, always judging for themselves, and, though often wrong, seldom choosing the worse side when there was any one present capable of advocating the better. Light-hearted too, full of animal spirits and joyousness; revelling in the fun of hearing rival orators inveigh against each other; bursting with laughter at the mingled floods of coarse buffoonery and fine wit poured forth by the licensed libellers of their comic stage against their orators and statesmen, their poets, their gods, and even themselves—'that angry, waspish, intractable little old man, Demos of Pnyx,'* the well-known laughing-stock of one of the most successful comedies of Aristophanes. They are accused of fickleness; but Mr. Grote has shown on how false an estimate of historical facts that imputa-

* Mr. Grote's paraphrase of

Ἀγροικος ὀργὴν, κναμοτρώξ, ἀκράχολος,
Δῆμος Πνυκίτης, δύσκολον γερόντιον. (*Arist.* Eq. 41.)

tion rests,* and that they were much rather remarkable for the constancy of their attachments. They were not fickle, but (a very different quality, vulgarly confounded with it), mobile; keenly susceptible individually, and of necessity still more collectively, to the feeling and impression of the moment. The Demos may be alternately likened to the commonly received idea of a man, a woman, or a child, but never a clown or a boor. Right or wrong, wise or foolish, Athenians are never ἀπαίδευτοι; theirs are never the errors of untaught or unexercised minds. They are always the same Athenians who have thrilled with the grandeur and pathos of Æschylus and Sophocles, who were able to ransom themselves from captivity by reciting the verses of Euripides, who have had Pericles or Demosthenes for their daily instructor and adviser, and have heard every species of judicial case, public and private, civil and criminal, propounded for their decision, in the most finished compositions ever spoken to a public assembly. They are the same Athenians, too, who live and move among the visible memorials of ancestors, the greatest of whose glories was that they had dared and suffered all things rather than desert the liberty of Greece. Their just pride in such progenitors, and their sense of what was due to the dignity and fame of their city, were ever ready to be evoked for any noble cause. Even at the last, when their energies, too late aroused, had been insufficient to save them, and they lay crushed at the feet of a conqueror, they earned the admiration of posterity by bestowing,

* See this point admirably handled in the remarks, in the last chapter but one of the fourth volume, on the condemnation of Miltiades.

instead of displeasure, additional distinctions on the author and adviser of the struggle which had preserved their honour, though not their safety or their freedom.

In every respect Athens deserved the high commendation given her by Pericles in his Funeral Oration, of being the educator of Greece.* And we cannot better set forth the characteristics of this great commonwealth at its greatest period, than by following Mr. Grote in quoting some passages from that celebrated discourse.†

'We live under a constitution such as noway to envy the laws of our neighbours—ourselves an example to others rather than imitators. It is called a democracy, since its aim tends towards the Many, and not towards the Few; in regard to private matters and disputes, the laws deal equally with every one; while in respect to public dignity and importance, the position of each is determined, not by class influence, but by worth, according as his reputation stands in his particular department; nor does poverty or obscure station keep him back, if he has any capacity of benefiting the state. And our social march is free, not merely in regard to public affairs, but also in regard to tolerance of each other's diversity of tastes and pursuits. For we are not angry with our neighbour for what he does to please himself, nor do we put on those sour looks, which are offensive, though they do no positive damage. Thus conducting our private social intercourse with reciprocal indulgence, we are restrained from misconduct in public matters by fear and reverence of our magistrates for the time being, and of our laws, especially such laws as are instituted for the protection of the wronged, and such as,

* Τὴν πᾶσαν πόλιν τῆς Ἑλλάδος παίδευσιν εἶναι. (*Thuc.* ii. 41.)

† Vol. vi. pp. 193—196. We have ventured to change a few expressions in Mr. Grote's translation, in order, though at the expense of smoothness, to bring it closer to the literal meaning of the original.

though unwritten, are enforced by a common sense of shame. Besides this, we have provided for our minds numerous recreations from toil, partly by our customary solemnities of sacrifice and festival throughout the year, partly by the elegance of our private arrangements, the daily charm of which banishes pain and annoyance. From the magnitude of our city, the products of the whole earth are brought to us, so that our enjoyment of foreign luxuries is as much our own and assured, as of those which we produce at home. In respect to training for war, we differ from our opponents (the Lacedæmonians) on several material points. First, we lay open our city as a common resort; we apply no xenelasy to exclude any one from any lesson or spectacle, for fear lest an enemy should see and profit by it: for we trust less to manœuvres and artifices, than to native boldness of spirit, for warlike efficiency. Next, in regard to education, while the Lacedæmonians even from their earliest youth subject themselves to an irksome exercise for the attainment of courage, we, with our easy habits of life, are not less prepared than they to encounter all perils within the measure of our strength. . . . .

'We combine taste for the beautiful with frugality of life, and cultivate intellectual speculation without being enervated: we employ wealth for the service of our occasions, not for the ostentation of talk; nor is it disgraceful to any one who is poor to confess himself so, though he may be blamed for not actively bestirring himself to get rid of his poverty. Our politicians are not exempted from attending to their private affairs, and our private citizens have a competent knowledge of public matters; for we stand alone in regarding the man who keeps aloof from politics, not as a blameless person, but as a useless one. Far from accounting discussion an impediment to action, we think it an evil not to have been instructed by deliberation before the time for execution arrives. For, in truth, we combine in a remarkable manner boldness in action with full debate beforehand on that which we are going about: whereas with others ignorance alone imparts daring, debate induces hesitation. Assuredly those ought to be regarded as

the stoutest of heart, who, knowing most accurately both the terrors of war and the sweets of peace, are still not the less willing to encounter peril.'

This picture, drawn by Pericles and transmitted by Thucydides, of ease of living, and freedom from social intolerance, combined with the pleasures of cultivated taste, and a lively interest and energetic participation in public affairs, is one of the most interesting passages in Greek history: placed, as it is, in the speech in which the first of Athenian statesmen professed to show 'by what practices and by what institutions and manners the city had become great.'* This remarkable testimony, as Mr. Grote has not failed to point out, wholly conflicts, so far as Athens is concerned, with what we are so often told about the entire sacrifice, in the ancient republics, of the liberty of the individual to an imaginary good of the state. In the greatest Greek commonwealth, as described by its most distinguished citizen, the public interest was held of paramount obligation in all things which concerned it; but, with that part of the conduct of individuals which concerned only themselves, public opinion did not interfere: while in the ethical practice of the moderns, this is exactly reversed, and no one is required by opinion to pay any regard to the public, except by conducting his own private concerns in conformity to its expectations. On this

* It is worthy of notice that in the speech of Nicias to his troops, preceding their final death-struggle in the harbour of Syracuse, he too (if correctly reported by Thucydides) reminds them of the same feature in their national institutions and habits, the unrivalled freedom of the individual in respect to his mode of life;—

πατρίδος τε τῆς ἐλευθερωτάτης ὑπομιμνήσκων, καὶ τῆς ἐν αὐτῇ ἀνεπιτάκτου πᾶσιν ἐς τὴν δίαιταν ἐξουσίας. (*Thuc.* vii. 69.)

vital question of social morals, Mr. Grote's remarks, though belonging to an earlier volume than those which we are reviewing, are too valuable, as well as too much to the purpose, to require any apology for quoting them. (Vol. vi. pp. 200—2.)

'The stress which he (Pericles) lays upon the liberty of thought and action at Athens, not merely from excessive restraint of law, but also from practical intolerance between man and man, and tyranny of the majority over individual dissenters in taste and pursuits, deserves serious notice, and brings out one of those points in the national character upon which the intellectual development of the time mainly depended. The national temper was indulgent in a high degree to all the varieties of positive impulses: the peculiar promptings in every individual bosom were allowed to manifest themselves and bear fruit, without being suppressed by external opinion, or trained into forced conformity with some assumed standard: antipathies against any of them formed no part of the habitual morality of the citizen. While much of the generating causes of human hatred was thus rendered inoperative, and while society was rendered more comfortable, more instructive, and more stimulating, all its germs of productive fruitful genius, so rare everywhere, found in such an atmosphere the maximum of encouragement. Within the limits of the law, assuredly as faithfully observed at Athens as anywhere in Greece, individual impulse, taste, and even eccentricity, were accepted with indulgence, instead of being a mark, as elsewhere, for the intolerance of neighbours or of the public. This remarkable feature in Athenian life will help us in a future chapter to explain the striking career of Socrates; and it farther presents to us under another face, a great part of that which the censors of Athens denounced under the name of 'democratical licence.' The liberty and diversity of individual life in that city were offensive to Xenophon, Plato, and Aristotle—attached either to the monotonous drill of Sparta, or to some other ideal standard,

which, though much better than the Spartan in itself, they were disposed to impress upon society with a heavy-handed uniformity. That liberty of individual action, not merely from the over-restraints of law, but from the tyranny of jealous opinion, such as Pericles depicts in Athens, belongs more naturally to a democracy, where there is no select One or Few to receive worship and set the fashion, than to any other form of government. But it is very rare even in democracies: nor can we dissemble the fact, that none of the governments of modern times, democratical, aristocratical, or monarchical, presents anything like the picture of generous tolerance towards social dissents, and spontaneity of individual taste, which we read in the speech of the Athenian statesman. In all of them, the intolerance of the national opinion cuts down individual character to one out of a few set types, to which every person, or every family, is constrained to adjust itself, and beyond which all exceptions meet either with hatred or with derision. To impose upon men such restraints, either of law or of opinion, as are requisite for the security and comfort of society, but to encourage rather than repress the free play of individual impulse subject to those limits, is an ideal which, if it was ever approached at Athens, has certainly never been attained, and has indeed comparatively been little studied or cared for, in any modern society.'

The difference here pointed out between the temper of the Athenian and that of the modern mind, is most closely connected with the wonderful display of individual genius which made Athens illustrious, and with the comparative mediocrity of modern times. Originality is not always genius, but genius is always originality; and a society which looks jealously and distrustfully on original people—which imposes its common level of opinion, feeling, and conduct, on all its individual members—may have the satisfaction of thinking itself very moral and re-

spectable, but it must do without genius. It may have persons of talent, who bring a larger than usual measure of commonplace ability into the service of the common notions of the time; but genius, in such a soil, is either fatally stunted in its growth, or if its native strength forbids this, it usually retires into itself, and dies without a sign.

The ambitious external policy of Athens, is one of the points in Greek history which have been most perversely misjudged and misunderstood. Modern historians seem to have succeeded to the jealous animosity of the Corinthians, and other members of the Spartan alliance, at the opening of the Peloponnesian war, though by no means at one with them in the reasons they are able to assign for it. The Athenians certainly were not exempt from the passion, universal in the ancient world, for conquest and dominion. It was a blemish, when judged by the universal standard of right; but as a fact, it was most beneficial to the world, and could not have been other than it was without crippling them in their vocation as the organ of progress. There was scarcely a possibility of permanent improvement for mankind, until intellect had first asserted its superiority, even in a military sense, over brute force. With the barbarous part of the species pressing in all round, to crush every early germ of improvement, all would have been lost if there had not also been an instinct in the better and more gifted portions of mankind to push for dominion over the duller and coarser. Besides, in a small but flourishing free community like Athens, ambition was the simple dictate of prudence. No such community could have had any safety for its own freedom, but by

acquiring power. Instead of reprobating the Athenian maritime empire, the whole of mankind, beginning with the subject states themselves, had cause to lament that it was not much longer continued; for that the fate of Greek civilization was bound up with it, is proved by the whole course of the history. When the jealousies of the other Greek states stripped Athens of her empire, and nominally restored the subject allies to an independence which they were wholly incapable of maintaining, Greece lost her sole chance of making successful head against Macedonia or Rome. And considering what the short period of Athenian greatness has done for the world, it is painful to think in how much more advanced a stage human improvement might now have been, if the Athens of Pericles could have lived on in undiminished spirit and energy for but one century more.

The Athenian empire was the purest in its origin of all the empires of antiquity. It was at first a free and equal confederacy for defence against the Persians, organized by Aristides with a justice worthy of his name. It never would have become anything else, but that the majority of the allies, consisting of the comparatively unwarlike and energetic Asiatic Greeks, chose to make their contribution in money instead of personal service, preferring to pay Athens for protecting them, rather than protect themselves. Even the removal of the treasury of the confederacy from Delos to Athens, was no act of the Athenians, but of the synod of the confederacy, on the proposition of Samos. When, at a later date, some of the states attempted to secede from the alliance, and enjoy the peace and security which it afforded, with-

out sharing in the cost, the general sentiment of the confederates at first went along with Athens in bringing back the recusants by force of arms. But, with these small town communities, to be defeated was to be conquered, and the conquered, by the universal custom of antiquity, received the law from the conqueror. That law, in the case of Athens, was only occasionally either harsh or onerous; yet thus, by degrees, the once equal allies sunk into tributaries. The few who had neither revolted, nor commuted personal service for pecuniary payment, retained their naval and military force, and their immunity from tribute, and had nothing to complain of, but that, like the dependencies of England or of any modern nation, they were compelled to join in the wars of the dominant state, without having any voice in deciding them. They do not seem to have alleged any other practical grievances against the Athenian community: their complaints, recorded by Thucydides, turn almost solely upon offence to the Grecian sentiment of city independence and dignity. Under the protection of the powerful Athenian navy, the allied states enjoyed a security never before known in Greece, and which no one of them could possibly have acquired by its own efforts. Many of them grew rich and prosperous. With their internal government Athens, as a general rule, did not interfere; in Mr. Grote's opinion, not even to make it democratical, when it did not happen to be so already. Like all the weak states of antiquity, whether called independent or not, they were liable to extortion and oppression; not, however, from the Athenian people, but from rich and powerful Athenians in command of expedi-

tions, against whom the Demos, when judicially appealed to, was ready to give redress. The most express testimony is borne to this general fact by the able oligarchical conspirator Phrynichus, as reported by the oligarchically inclined Thucydides, in his account of that remarkable incident in Athenian history, the revolution of the Four Hundred. The historian represents Phrynichus as reminding his fellow-conspirators that they could expect neither assistance nor good-will from the allies, since these well knew that it was from the oligarchical Athenians they were liable to injury, and looked upon the Demos as their protector.* The reality of the protection is exemplified by the case of Paches, the victorious general who had just before captured Mitylene. The resentment of the Athenians against that revolted city was such, that they were (as is well known) persuaded by Cleon to pass a decree for putting the whole military population to death, though they recalled the mandate before it had been executed. Yet, Paches having abused his victory by violating two women of Mitylene (having first put their husbands to death) was prosecuted by them before the Athenian dicastery, and the facts being proved, was so overwhelmed by the general burst of indignation, that he slew himself in open court. This incident (which until its real circumstances had been hunted out by

* Τούς τε καλοὺς κἀγαθοὺς ὀνομαζομένους οὐκ ἐλάσσω αὐτοὺς νομίζειν σφίσι πράγματα παρέξειν τοῦ δήμου, πορισταὶς ὄντας καὶ ἐσηγητὰς τῶν κακῶν τῷ δήμῳ, ἐξ ὧν τὰ πλείω αὐτοὺς ὠφελεῖσθαι· καὶ τὸ μὲν ἐπ' ἐκείνοις εἶναι, καὶ ἄκριτοι ἂν καὶ βιαιότερον ἀποθνήσκειν, τόν τε δῆμον σφῶν τε καταφυγὴν εἶναι καὶ ἐκείνων σωφρονιστήν. Καὶ ταῦτα παρ' αὐτῶν τῶν ἔργων ἐπισταμένας τὰς πόλεις σαφῶς αὐτὸς εἰδέναι, ὅτι οὕτω νομίζουσιν. (Thuc. viii. 48.)

Niebuhr, was one of the stock examples of Athenian and popular ingratitude) is a striking illustration of the difference between the Athenian empire and the Lacedæmonian; for when Spartan citizens, in repeated instances, committed similar enormities, not against conquered enemies but friendly allies, no redress could be obtained. It required the field of Leuctra to avenge the daughters of Skedasus, or appease the manes of the victims of the harmost Aristodemus.

However unpopular the dominion of Athens may have been among her subjects, though it appears to have been so with the leading men rather than with the majority, they had reason enough to regret it after it was at an end; for not only was the little finger of Lacedæmon heavier than the whole body of Athens, but many of them only exchanged Greek dominion for that of the barbarians. Sparta was never able, for more than a few years, to protect the Asiatic Greeks even against Persia; and at the height of her power, as soon as the obligation of defending them became inconvenient, she, by the peace of Antalcidas, actually ceded the whole of that great division of Greece to the Persian king, to whom it remained subject until the invasion of Alexander. Several of the most prosperous of the islanders fared no better: Cos, Chios, and Rhodes, when by the Social War they succeeded in detaching themselves from the second Athenian empire, fell almost immediately into dependence on the Carian despot Mausolus, against whom the Rhodians had soon to appeal again to their enemy, Athens, for assistance. So mere a name was that universal autonomy, which was used so successfully to stir up the feelings of the Hellenic world against

its noblest member; so entirely did the independence of Greece turn on the maintenance of some cohesion among her multifarious particles, while the political instincts of her people obstinately rejected the merging of the single city-republic in any larger unity.

The intellectual and moral pre-eminence which made Athens the centre of good to Greece, and of the good to after-generations of which Greece has been the medium, was wholly the fruit of Athenian institutions. It was the consequence, first of democracy, and secondly, of the wise and well-considered organization, by which the Athenian democracy was distinguished among the democratic constitutions of antiquity. The term democracy may perhaps be deemed inapplicable to any of the Grecian governments, on account of the existence of slavery; and it is inapplicable to them, in the purest and most honourable sense of the term. But in another sense, not altogether inappropriate, those governments, the first to which the word democracy was applied, must be considered entitled to the name; in the same manner as it is given to the northern States of America, although women are there excluded from the rights of citizenship; an exclusion which, equally with that of slaves, militates against the democratic principle. The Athenian Constitution was so far a democracy, that it was government by a multitude, composed in majority of poor persons—small landed proprietors and artisans. It had the additional democratic characteristic, far more practically important than even the political franchise; it was a government of boundless publicity and freedom of speech. It had

the liberty of the bema, of the dicastery, the portico, the palæstra, and the stage; altogether a full equivalent for the liberty of the press. Further, it was the *only* government of antiquity which possessed this inestimable advantage in the same degree, or retained it as long. Enemies and friends alike testify that the παρρησία of Athens was paralleled in no other place in the known world. Every office and honour was open to every citizen, not, as in the aristocratic Roman republic (or even the British monarchy), almost nominally, but really: while the daily working of Athenian institutions (by means of which every citizen was accustomed to hear every sort of question, public and private, discussed by the ablest men of the time, with the earnestness of purpose and fulness of preparation belonging to actual business, deliberative or judicial) formed a course of political education, the equivalent of which modern nations have not known how to give even to those whom they educate for statesmen. To their multitudinous judicial tribunals the Athenians were also indebted for that habitual love of fair play, and of hearing both sides of a case, which was more or less a quality of the Greeks generally, but had so firm a hold on the Athenians that it did not desert them under the most passionate excitement. The potency of Grecian democracy in making every individual in the multitude identify his feelings and interests with those of the state, and regard its freedom and greatness as the first and principal of his own personal concerns, cannot be better described than in the words of Mr. Grote. "After quoting a remarkable passage from Herodotus, descriptive of the unexpected outburst of patriotic energy at Athens after the ex-

pulsion of the Pisistratidæ and the establishment of the Cleisthenean constitution,* Mr. Grote proceeds as follows (vol. iv. pp. 237-9).

'Democracy in Grecian antiquity possessed the privilege, not only of kindling an earnest and unanimous attachment to the constitution in the bosoms of the citizens, but also of creating an energy of public and private action such as could never be obtained under an oligarchy, where the utmost that could be hoped for was a passive acquiescence and obedience. Mr. Burke has remarked that the mass of the people are generally very indifferent about theories of government: but such indifference (although improvements in the practical working of all governments tend to foster it) is hardly to be expected among any people who exhibit decided mental activity and spirit on other matters; and the reverse was unquestionably true, in the year 500 B.C., among the communities of ancient Greece. Theories of government were there anything but a dead letter; they were connected with emotions of the strongest as well as of the most opposite character. The theory of a permanent ruling One, for example, was universally odious; that of a ruling Few, though acquiesced in, was never positively attractive, unless either where it was associated with the maintenance of peculiar education and habits, as at Sparta, or where it presented itself as the only antithesis to democracy, the latter having by peculiar circumstances become an object of terror. But the theory of democracy was pre-eminently seductive; creating in the mass of the citizens an intense positive attachment, and disposing them to voluntary action and suffering on its behalf, such as no coercion on the part of other governments could

* Ἀθηναῖοι μέν νυν ἤυξηντο· δηλοῖ δὲ οὐ κατ' ἓν μόνον ἀλλὰ πανταχῇ, ἡ ἰσηγορίη ὡς ἔστι χρῆμα σπουδαῖον, εἰ καὶ Ἀθηναῖοι τυραννευομένοι μὲν, οὐδαμῶν τῶν σφέας περιοικεόντων ἔσαν τὰ πολέμια ἀμείνους, ἀπαλλαχθέντες δὲ τυράννων, μακρῷ πρῶτοι ἐγένοντο· δηλοῖ ὧν ταῦτα, ὅτι κατεχομένοι μὲν, ἐθελοκάκεον, ὡς δεσπότῃ ἐργαζομένοι, ἐλευθερωθέντων δὲ, αὐτὸς ἕκαστος ἑωϋτῷ προθυμέετο κατεργάζεσθαι. (Herod. v. 78.)

entail. Herodotus, in his comparison of the three sorts of government, puts in the front rank of the advantages of democracy 'its most splendid name and promise'—its power of enlisting the hearts of the citizens in support of their constitution, and of providing for all a common bond of union and fraternity. This is what even democracy did not always do: but it was what no other government in Greece *could* do: a reason alone sufficient to stamp it as the best government, and presenting the greatest chance of beneficent results. . . . . Among the Athenian citizens, certainly, it produced a strength and unanimity of positive political sentiment, such as has rarely been seen in the history of mankind; which excites our surprise and admiration the more, when we compare it with the apathy which had preceded, and which is even implied as the natural state of the public mind in Solon's famous proclamation against neutrality in a sedition. Because democracy happens to be unpalatable to most modern readers, they have been accustomed to look upon the sentiment here described only in its least honourable manifestations—in the caricatures of Aristophanes, or in the empty commonplaces of rhetorical declaimers. But it is not in this way that the force, the earnestness, or the binding value of democratical sentiment at Athens is to be measured. We must listen to it as it comes from the lips of Pericles, while he is strenuously enforcing upon the people those active duties for which it both implanted the stimulus and supplied the courage; or from the oligarchical Nikias in the harbour of Syracuse, when he is endeavouring to revive the courage of his despairing troops for one last death-struggle, and when he appeals to their democratical patriotism as to the only flame yet alive and burning even in that moment of agony. From the time of Kleisthenes downward, the creation of this new mighty impulse makes an entire revolution in the Athenian character; and if the change still stood out in so prominent a manner before the eyes of Herodotus, much more must it have been felt by the contemporaries among whom it occurred.'

The influences here spoken of were those of demo-

cracy generally. For the peculiar and excellent organization of her own democracy, Athens was indebted to a succession of eminent men. The earliest was her great legislator, Solon; himself the first capital prize which Athens drew in the dispensations of the Destinies; a man whose personal virtue ennobled the city by which he was chosen to legislate, and the merit of whose institutions was a principal source of the deep-rooted respect for the laws, which distinguished Athens beyond any other of the ancient democracies. The salutary forms of business established by Solon, and calculated to secure as much caution and deliberation as were compatible with ultimate decision by a sovereign Ecclesia, lived through the successive changes by which the Constitution was rendered more and more democratic. And though it is commonly supposed that popular passion in a democracy is peculiarly liable to trample on forms when they stand between it and its object—which is indeed, without question, one of the dangers of a democracy—there is no point in the character of the Athenians more remarkable, than their respect and attachment to the forms of their Constitution. In the height of their anger against Pericles, for not leading them out to defend their lands and houses from the ravages of the Peloponnesians—because he, standing on his privilege as a magistrate, abstained from calling an assembly, no assembly met. There is indeed but one marked instance known to us in Athenian history, of that violation of forms which was the daily practice of most of the oligarchical governments. That one was a case of great and just provocation, the 'cause célèbre' of the six generals

who neglected to save their drowning countrymen after the sea fight of Arginusæ: and there was, as Mr. Grote has shown, no injustice in the fact of their condemnation by the people, though there was a blameable violation of the salutary rules of criminal procedure established for the protection of the innocent. It was in this case that the philosopher Socrates, accidentally that month a senator of the presiding tribe, as firm against the 'civium ardor prava jubentium' as afterwards against the 'vultus instantis tyranni,' singly refused to join in putting the question to the assembly contrary to the laws; adding one to the proofs that the man of greatest intellect at that time in Athens was also its most virtuous citizen.

After Solon (omitting the intervening usurpation of Pisistratus), the first great constitutional change was the reformation of Cleisthenes, an eminent man, to whose character and historical importance no one before Mr. Grote had done justice. The next was that in which the immediate mover was Aristides, at the re-establishment of the city after the Persian war, when the poorest class of citizens was first admitted to share in public employments. The final measures which completed the democratic constitution were those of Pericles and Ephialtes; more particularly the latter, a statesman of whom, from the unfortunate absence of any cotemporary history of the period between the Persian and Peloponnesian wars except the brief introductory sketch of Thucydides, we have to lament that too little is known, but of whom the recorded anecdotes indicate a man worthy to have been the friend of Pericles.*

* See particularly Ælian, V. H. xi. 9, and xiii. 39.

Ephialtes perished by assassination, a victim to the rancorous hatred of the oligarchical party. Assassination afterwards disappears from Athenian public life, until reintroduced on a regular system by the same party, to effect the revolution of the Four Hundred. The Athenian Many, of whose democratic irritability and suspicion we hear so much, are rather to be accused of too easy and good-natured a confidence, when we reflect that they had living in the midst of them the very men who, on the first show of an opportunity, were ready to compass the subversion of the democracy by the dark deeds of Peisander and Antiphon, and when they had effected their object, perpetrated all the villanies of Critias and his associates. These men ought always to be present to the mind, not merely as a dark background to the picture of the Athenian republic, but as an active power in it. They were no obscure private individuals, but men of rank and fortune, not only prominent as politicians and public speakers, but continually trusted with all the great offices of state. Truly Athens was in more danger from these men than from the demagogues; they were indeed themselves the worst of the demagogues—described by Phrynichus, their confederate, as, for their own purposes, the leaders and instigators of the Demos to its most blameable actions, *πορισταὶς καὶ ἐσηγητὰς τῶν κακῶν τῷ δήμῳ, ἐξ ὧν τὰ πλείω αὐτοὺς ὠφελεῖσθαι.*

These are a few of the topics on which a flood of light is let in by Mr. Grote's History, and from which those who have not read it may form some notion of the interest which pervades it, especially the part relating to the important century between 500 and

400 B.C. The searching character of Mr. Grote's historical criticism is not suspiciously confined to matters in which his own political opinions may be supposed to be interested. Though the statement has the air of an exaggeration, yet after much study of Mr. Grote's book we do not hesitate to assert, that there is hardly a fact of importance in Grecian history which was perfectly understood before his re-examination of it. This will not seem incredible, to those who are aware how new an art that of writing history is; how very recently it is that we possess histories, of events not cotemporary with the writer, which, apart from literary merit, have any value otherwise than as materials; how utterly uncritical, until lately, were all historians, even as to the most important facts in history, and how much, even after criticism had commenced, the later writers merely continued to repeat after the earlier. In our own generation, Niebuhr has effected a radical revolution in the opinions of all educated persons respecting Roman history. Grecian events, subsequent to the Homeric period, are more authentically recorded; but there, too, a very moderate acquaintance with the evidence was sufficient to show how superficially it had hitherto been examined.

That the Sophists, for example, were not the knaves and profligates they are so often represented to have been, could be gathered even from the statements of the hostile witnesses on whose authority they were condemned. The Protagoras alone, of their great enemy Plato, is a sufficient document. But Mr. Grote has been the first to point out clearly what the Sophists really were.

That term was the common designation for speculative inquirers generally, and more particularly for instructors of youth; and was applied to Socrates and Plato, as much as to those whom they confuted. The Sophists formed no school, had no common doctrines, but speculated in the most conflicting ways on physics and metaphysics; while with respect to morals, those among them who professed to prepare young men for active life, taught the current morality of the age in its best form: the apologue of the Choice of Hercules was the composition of a Sophist. It is most unjust to the Sophists to adopt, as the verdict of history upon them, the severe judgment of Plato, although from Plato's point of view they deserved it. He judged them from the superior elevation of a great moral and social reformer: from that height he looked down contemptuously enough, not on them alone, but on statesmen, orators, artists—on the whole practical life of the period, and all its institutions, popular, oligarchical, or despotic; demanding a reconstitution of society from its foundations, and a complete renovation of the human mind. One who had these high aspirations, had naturally little esteem for men who did not see, or aspire to see, beyond the common ideas of their age; but, as Mr. Grote remarks, to accept his judgment of them would be like characterizing the teachers and politicians of the present time in the words applied to them by Owen or Fourier. Even Plato, for the most part, puts the immoral doctrines ascribed to the Sophists (such as the doctrine that might makes right) into the mouths not of Sophists, but of ambitious active politicians, like Callicles. The Sophists, in Plato, almost always express themselves

not only with decorum, but with good sense and feeling, on the subject of social duties; though by his Socratic dialectics he always succeeds in puzzling them, and displaying the confusion of their ideas, or rather of the common ideas of mankind, of which they are the exponents.

Again, the Athenian democracy had been so outrageously, and without measure, misrepresented, that whoever had read, as so few have done, Thucydides and the orators with decent intelligence and candour, could easily perceive that the vulgar representation was very wide of the truth; just as any one who had read Livy could see, and many did see, that the Agrarian law was not the unjust spoliation that was pretended: but as it required Niebuhr to detect with accuracy what the Agrarian law actually was, so no less profound a knowledge of Greek literature than that of Mr. Grote, combined with equal powers of reasoning and reflection, would have sufficed to make the effective working of the Athenian Constitution as well known to us as it may now be pronounced to be. The mountain of error which had accumulated and hardened over Greek history, the removal of which had been meritoriously commenced by Dr. Thirlwall, has not only been shaken off, but the outlines of the real object are now made visible. And so cautious and sober is Mr. Grote in the estimate of evidence, so constantly on his guard against letting his conclusions outrun his proofs, as to make it a matter of wonder that among so much that is irreparably lost, his researches have enabled him to arrive at so considerable an amount of positive and certifiable result.

This conscientious scrupulousness in maintaining

the demarcation between conjecture and proof, is more indispensable than any other excellence in a historian, and above all in one who sets aside the common notion of many of the facts which he relates, and replaces it by a version of his own. Without this quality, such an innovator on existing beliefs inspires no reliance, and can only, at most, unsettle historical opinion, without helping to restore it. Anybody can scrawl over the canvas with the commonplaces of rhetoric or the catchwords of party politics; and many, especially in Germany, can paint in a picture from the more or less ingenious suggestions of a learned imagination. But Mr. Grote commands the confidence of the reader by his sobriety in hypothesis, by never attempting to pass off an inference as a fact, and, when he differs from the common opinion, explaining his reasons with the precision and minuteness of one who neither desires nor expects that anything will be taken upon trust. He has felt that a history of Greece, to be of any value, must be also a running commentary on the evidence, and he has endeavoured to put the reader in a position to judge for himself on every disputable point. But the discussions, though to a historical taste as interesting as the narrative, are not carried on at its expense. Wherever the facts, authentically known, allow a consecutive stream of narrative to be kept up, the story is told in a more interesting manner than it has anywhere been told before, except in the finest passages of Thucydides.

We are indeed disposed to assign to this history almost as high a rank in narrative as in thought. It is open, no doubt, to minute criticism; and many writers are superior to Mr. Grote in rapidity, grace,

and picturesqueness of style. But even in these respects there is no such deficiency as amounts to a fault, while in two qualities, far more important to the interest, not to say the value, of his recitals, he has few equals and probably no superior. The first is, that at each point in the series of events, he makes it his primary object to fill his own mind and his reader's with as correct and complete a conception as can be formed of the situation; so that we enter at once into the impressions and feelings of the actors, both collective and individual. Niebuhr had already, in his Lectures on Ancient History, carried his characteristic liveliness of conception into the representation of the leading characters of Greek history, depicting them, often we fear with insufficient warrant from evidence, like persons with whom he had long lived and been familiar; but, for clearness and correctness in conceiving the surrounding circumstances, and the posture of affairs at each particular moment, we do not think him at all comparable to Mr. Grote.

One of the beneficial fruits of this quality is, that it makes the history a philosophic one without apparent effort. There is no need of lengthened discussion to connect causes with their effects; the causes and effects are parts of the same picture, and the causes are seen in action before it appears what they are to produce. For example, the reader whose mind is filled with the greatness attained by Athens while her councils were ruled by the commanding intellect and self-restraining prudence of Pericles, might almost anticipate the coming disasters when he finds, in the early chapters of the seventh volume, into the hands of what advisers Athens had already fallen. And,

mark well, these evil advisers were not the demagogues, but the chiefs of the aristocracy, the richest and most highborn men in the republic—Nicias and Alcibiades. Mr. Grote had already shown grounds for believing that Cleon, and men of his stamp, had been far too severely dealt with by historians; not that they did not frequently deserve censure, but that they were by no means the worst misleaders of the Athenian people. The demagogues were, as he observes, essentially opposition speakers. The conduct of affairs was habitually in the hands of the rich and great, who had by far the largest share of personal influence, and on whose mismanagement there would have been hardly any check, but for the demagogues and their hostile criticism. These opinions receive ample confirmation from the course of affairs, when, there being no longer any lowborn Cleon or Hyperbolus to balance their influence, Nicias and Alcibiades had full scope to ruin the commonwealth. The contrary vices of these two men, both equally fatal, are exemplified in the crowning act of their maladministration; the one having been the principal adviser of the ill-starred expedition to Syracuse, while the other was the main cause of its ruinous failure, by his intellectual and moral incapacity.

This genuine realization of the successive situations, also renders the narrative itself a picture of the Greek mind. Carrying on, throughout, the succession of feelings concurrently with that of events, the writer becomes, as it were, himself a Greek, and takes the reader along with him. And hence, if every discussion or dissertation in the book were omitted, it would still be wonderfully in advance of any former history

in making the Greeks intelligible. For example, no modern writer has made the reader enter into the religious feelings of the Greeks as Mr. Grote does. Other historians let it be supposed that, except in some special emergencies, beliefs and feelings relating to the unknown world counted for very little among the determining causes of events; and it is a kind of accredited opinion, that the religion of the ancients sat almost as lightly on them, as if it had been to them, what it is in modern literature, a mere poetical ornament. But the case was quite otherwise: religion was one of the most active elements in Grecian life, with an effect, in the early rude times, probably on the whole beneficial, but growing more and more injurious as civilization advanced. Mr. Grote is the first historian who has given an adequate impression of the omnipresence of this element in Grecian life; the incessant reference to supernatural hopes and fears which pervaded public and private transactions, as well as the terrible power with which those feelings were capable of acting, and not unfrequently did act, on the Hellenic susceptibilities. While our admiration is thus increased for the few superior minds who, like Pericles and Epaminondas, rose above at least the vulgarer parts of the religion of their country, or, like Plato, probably rejected it altogether, we are enabled to see the explanation of much that would otherwise be enigmatical, and to judge the Greeks with the same amount of allowance for errors produced by their religion, which in parallel cases is always conceded to the moderns.

The other eminent quality which distinguishes Mr. Grote's narrative is its pervading ἦθος; the moral

interest, which is so much deeper and more impressive than picturesque interest, and exists in portions of the history which afford no materials for the latter. The events do not always admit of being vividly depicted to the mental eye; and when they do, the author does not always make use of the opportunity: but one thing he never fails in—the moral aspect of the events and of the persons is never out of sight, and gives the predominating character to the recital. We use the word moral not solely in the restricted sense of right and wrong, but as inclusive of the whole of the sentiments connected with the occasion. Along with the clear light of the scrutinizing intellect, there is the earnest feeling of a sympathizing contemporary. This rich source of impressiveness in narration is often wanting in writers of the liveliest fancy, and the most brilliant faculty of delineating the mere outside of historical facts.

Nor is the narrative deficient in the commoner sources of interest. The apt selection and artistic grouping of the details of battles and sieges, Mr. Grote had found done to his hand by the consummate narrators whom he follows, and in this respect he could do no better than simply to reproduce their recital. There is much more that belongs peculiarly to himself, in the series of remarkable characters whom he exhibits before us, not so much (generally speaking) in description or analysis, as in action. In the earlier period, the prominent characters are Themistocles and Aristides: Themistocles, the most sagacious, the most far-sighted, the most judiciously daring, the craftiest, and unfortunately also one of the most unprincipled of politicians; who first saved,

then aggrandized, and at last would have sold his country. Aristides, the personification of public and private integrity, the one only Grecian statesman who finds grace before the somewhat pedantically rigid tribunal of the Platonic Socrates.

The figure which most brightly illuminates the middle period of Mr. Grote's history is Pericles—'the Thunderer'—'the Olympian Zeus,' as he was called by his libellers, the comic dramatists of Athens. Seldom, if ever, has there been seen in a statesman of any age, such a combination of great qualities as were united in this illustrious man: unrivalled in eloquence; eminent in all the acquirements, talents, and accomplishments of his country; the associate of all those among his cotemporaries who were above their age, either in positive knowledge or in freedom from superstition; though an aristocrat by birth and fortune, a thorough democrat in principle and conduct, yet never stooping to even the pardonable arts of courting popularity, but acquiring and maintaining his ascendancy solely by his commanding qualities; never flattering his countrymen save on what was really admirable in them, and which it was for their good to be taught to cherish, but the determined enemy of their faults and follies; ever ready to peril his popularity by giving disagreeable advice, and when not appreciated, rising up against the injustice done him with a scornful dignity almost amounting to defiance. Such was Pericles: and that such a man should have been practically first minister of Athens during the greatest part of a long political life, is not so much honourable to him as to the imperial people who were willing to be so led; who, though in fits of tem-

porary irritation and disappointment, excusable in the circumstances, they several times withdrew their favour from him, always hastened to give it back; and over whom, while he lived, no person of talents and virtues inferior to his was able to obtain any mischievous degree of influence. It is impossible to estimate how great a share this one man had in making the Athenians what they were. A great man had, in the unbounded publicity of Athenian political life, extraordinary facilities for moulding his country after his own image; and seldom has any people, during a whole generation, enjoyed such a course of education, as forty years of listening to the lofty spirit and practical wisdom of Pericles must have been to the Athenian Demos.

As the next in this gallery of historical portraits, we quote the character of another but a far inferior Athenian statesman, whom Mr. Grote is, we think, the very first to appreciate correctly, and bring before us in the colours and lineaments of life.

'Though Nikias, son of Nikeratus, had been for some time conspicuous in public life, and is said to have been more than once Strategus along with Pericles, this is the first occasion on which Thucydides introduces him to our notice. He was now one of the Strategi or generals of the commonwealth, and appears to have enjoyed, on the whole, a greater and more constant personal esteem than any citizen of Athens, from the present time down to his death. In wealth and in family, he ranked among the first class of Athenians: in political character, Aristotle placed him, together with Thucydides son of Melesias, and Theramenes, above all other names in Athenian history—seemingly even above Pericles. Such a criticism from Aristotle deserves respectful attention, though the facts before us completely belie so lofty an estimate. It

marks, however, the position occupied by Nikias in Athenian politics, as the principal person of what may be called the oligarchical party, succeeding Kimon and Thucydides, and preceding Theramenes. In looking to the conditions under which this party continued to subsist, we shall see that during the interval between Thucydides (son of Melesias) and Nikias, the democratical forms had acquired such confirmed ascendancy, that it would not have suited the purpose of any politician to betray evidence of positive hostility to them, prior to the Sicilian expedition and the great embarrassment in the foreign relations of Athens which arose out of that disaster. After that change, the Athenian oligarchs became emboldened and aggressive, so that we shall find Theramenes among the chief conspirators in the revolution of the Four Hundred: but Nikias represents the oligarchical party in its previous state of quiescence and torpidity, accommodating itself to a sovereign democracy, and existing in the form of common sentiment rather than of common purposes. And it is a remarkable illustration of the real temper of the Athenian people, that a man of this character, known as an oligarch but not feared as such, and doing his duty sincerely to the democracy, should have remained until his death the most esteemed and influential man in the city. He was a man of a sort of even mediocrity, in intellect, in education, and in oratory; forward in his military duties, and not only personally courageous in the field, but also competent as a general under ordinary circumstances: assiduous in the discharge of all political duties at home, especially in the post of Strategus or one of the ten generals of the state, to which he was frequently chosen and rechosen. Of the many valuable qualities combined in his predecessor Pericles, the recollection of whom was yet fresh in the Athenian mind, Nikias possessed two, on which, most of all, his influence rested—though, properly speaking, that influence belongs to the sum total of his character, and not to any special attributes in it. First, he was thoroughly incorruptible as to pecuniary gains—a quality so rare in Grecian public men of all the cities, that when a man once became

notorious for possessing it, he acquired a greater degree of trust than any superiority of intellect could have bestowed upon him: next, he adopted the Periclean view as to the necessity of a conservative or stationary foreign policy for Athens, and of avoiding new acquisitions at a distance, adventurous risks, or provocation to fresh enemies. With this important point of analogy, there were at the same time material differences between them even in regard to foreign policy. Pericles was a conservative, resolute against submitting to loss or abstraction of empire, as well as refraining from aggrandizement. Nikias was in policy faint-hearted, averse to energetic effort for any purpose whatever, and disposed not only to maintain peace, but even to purchase it by considerable sacrifices. Nevertheless, he was the leading champion of the conservative party of his day, always powerful at Athens: and as he was constantly familiar with the details and actual course of public affairs, capable of giving full effect to the cautious and prudential point of view, and enjoying unqualified credit for honest purposes—his value as a permanent counsellor was steadily recognised, even though in particular cases his counsel might not be followed.

'Besides these two main points, which Nikias had in common with Pericles, he was perfect in the use of those minor and collateral modes of standing well with the people, which that great man had taken little pains to practise. While Pericles attached himself to Aspasia, whose splendid qualities did not redeem in the eyes of the public either her foreign origin or her unchastity, the domestic habits of Nikias appear to have been strictly conformable to the rules of Athenian decorum. Pericles was surrounded by philosophers, Nikias by prophets—whose advice was necessary both as a consolation to his temperament, and as a guide to his intelligence under difficulties: one of them was constantly in his service and confidence; and his conduct appears to have been sensibly affected by the difference of character between one prophet and another, just as the government of Louis XIV. and other Catholic princes has been modified by the change

of confessors. To a life thus rigidly decorous and ultra-religious —both eminently acceptable to the Athenians—Nikias added the judicious employment of a large fortune with a view to popularity. Those liturgies (or expensive public duties undertaken by rich men each in his turn, throughout other cities of Greece as well as in Athens) which fell to his lot, were performed with such splendour, munificence, and good taste, as to procure for him universal encomiums; and so much above his predecessors as to be long remembered and extolled. Most of these liturgies were connected with the religious service of the state; so that Nikias, by his manner of performing them, displayed his zeal for the honour of the gods, at the same time that he laid up for himself a store of popularity. Moreover, the remarkable caution and timidity—not before an enemy, but in reference to his own fellow-citizens—which marked his character, rendered him pre-eminently scrupulous as to giving offence or making personal enemies. While his demeanour towards the poorer citizens generally was equal and conciliating, the presents which he made were numerous, both to gain friends and to silence assailants. We are not surprised to hear that various bullies, whom the comic writers turn to scorn, made their profit out of this susceptibility: but most assuredly, Nikias as a public man, though he might occasionally be cheated out of money, was greatly assisted by the reputation which he thus acquired.'

We have the more willingly extracted this passage, because, like many others in these volumes, it contains lessons applicable to other times and circumstances than those of Greece; Nicias being a perfect type of one large class of the favourites of public opinion, modern as well as ancient. And the view here incidentally presented of some points in the character and disposition of the Athenian Many, will afford to readers who only know Athens and Greece through

the medium of writers like Mitford, some faint idea of how much they have to unlearn.

With regard to style, in the ordinary sense, what is most noticeable in Mr. Grote is, that his style always rises with his subject. The more valuable the thought, or interesting the incident, the apter and more forcible is the expression; as is generally the case with writers who are thinking of their subject rather than of their literary reputation. We can conscientiously say of him what, rightly understood, is the highest praise which, on the score of mere composition, a writer in the more intellectual departments of literature can desire or deserve; that everything which he has to express, he is always able to express adequately and worthily.

APPENDIX

TO THE PAPER ENTITLED

'VINDICATION OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION OF FEBRUARY 1848.'

The following are the passages, translations of which are given in the text.

From the Speech of M. de Tocqueville.

'Pour parler d'abord de ce que j'ai appelé la classe qui gouverne (remarquez que je prends ces mots dans leur acception la plus générale: je ne parle pas seulement de la classe moyenne, mais de tous les citoyens, dans quelque position qu'ils soient, qui possèdent et exercent des droits politiques); je dis donc que ce qui existe dans la classe qui gouverne m'inquiète et m'effraye. Ce que j'y vois, messieurs, je puis l'exprimer par un mot: les mœurs publiques s'y altèrent, elles y sont déjà profondément altérées; elles s'y altèrent de plus en plus tous les jours; de plus en plus aux opinions, aux sentiments, aux idées communes, succèdent des intérêts particuliers, des visées particulières, des points de vue empruntés à la vie et à l'intérêt privés.

'Mon intention n'est point de forcer la chambre à s'appesantir, plus qu'il n'est nécessaire, sur ces tristes détails; je me bornerai à m'adresser à mes adversaires eux-mêmes, à mes collègues de la majorité ministérielle. Je les prie de faire pour leur propre usage une sorte de revue statistique des collèges électoraux qui les ont envoyés dans cette chambre; qu'ils composent une première catégorie de ceux qui ne votent pour eux que par suite, non pas d'opinions politiques, mais de sentiments

d'amitié particulière, ou de bon voisinage. Dans une seconde catégorie, qu'ils mettent ceux qui votent pour eux, non pas dans un point de vue d'intérêt public ou d'intérêt général, mais dans un point de vue d'intérêt purement local. A cette seconde catégorie, qu'ils en ajoutent enfin une troisième, composée de ceux qui votent pour eux pour des motifs d'intérêt purement individuels, et je leur demande si ce qui reste est très nombreux; je leur demande si ceux qui votent par un sentiment public désintéressé, par suite d'opinions, de passions publiques, si ceux là forment la majorité des électeurs qui leur ont conféré le mandat de député; je m'assure qu'ils decouvriront aisément le contraire. Je me permettai encore de leur demander si, à leur connaissance, depuis cinq ans, dix ans, quinze ans, le nombre de ceux qui votent pour eux par suite d'intérêts personnels et particuliers ne croît pas sans cesse; si le nombre de ceux qui votent pour eux par opinion politique ne décroît pas sans cesse? Qu'ils me disent enfin si autour d'eux, sous leurs yeux, il ne s'établit pas peu à peu, dans l'opinion publique, une sorte de tolérance singulière pour les faits dont je parle, si peu à peu il ne se fait pas une sorte de morale vulgaire et basse, suivant laquelle l'homme qui possède des droits politiques se doit à lui-même, doit à ses enfans, à sa femme, à ses parents, de faire un usage personnel de ces droits dans leur intérêt; si cela ne s'élève pas graduellement jusqu'à devenir une espèce de devoir de père de famille? Si cette morale nouvelle, inconnue dans les grands temps de notre histoire, inconnue au commencement de notre Révolution, ne se développe pas de plus en plus, et n'envahit pas chaque jour les esprits. Je le leur demande?'

'Je crois, messieurs, qu'on peut, sans blesser personne, dire que le gouvernement a ressaisi, dans ces dernières années surtout, des droits plus grands, une influence plus grande, des prérogatives plus considérables, plus multiples, que celles qu'il avait possédées à aucune autre époque. Il est devenu infiniment plus grand que n'auraient jamais pu se l'imaginer, non seulement ceux qui l'ont donné, mais même ceux qui l'ont reçu en 1830. . . . . C'est en ressaisissant de vieux

pouvoirs qu'on croyait avoir abolis en Juillet, en faisant revivre d'anciens droits qui semblaient annulés, en remettant en vigeur d'anciennes lois qu'on jugeait abrogées, en appliquant les lois nouvelles dans un autre sens que celui dans lequel elles avaient été faites, c'est par tous ces moyens détournés, par cette savante et patiente industrie, que le gouvernement a enfin repris plus d'action, plus d'activité et d'influence, qu'il n'en avait peut-être jamais eu en France en aucun temps. . . . . Et pensez-vous, messieurs, que cette manière que j'ai appelée tout à l'heure détournée et subreptice, de regagner peu à peu la puissance, de la prendre en quelque sorte par surprise, en se servant d'autres moyens que ceux que la constitution lui avait donnés; croyez-vous que ce spectacle étrange de l'adresse et du savoir-faire donné publiquement pendant plusieurs années, sur un si vaste théâtre, à toute une nation qui le regarde, croyez-vous que tel spectacle ait été de nature à améliorer les mœurs publiques? . . . . . Ils croient que la révolution qui s'est opérée depuis quinze ans dans les droits du pouvoir était nécessaire, soit; et ils ne l'ont pas fait par un intérêt particulier: je le veux croire; mais il n'est pas moins vrai qu'ils l'ont opérée par des moyens que la moralité publique désavoue; il n'est pas moins vrai qu'ils l'ont opérée en prenant les hommes, non par leur côté honnête, mais par leur mauvais côté—par leurs passions, par leur faiblesse, par leur intérêt, souvent par leurs vices. C'est ainsi que tout en voulant peut-être un but honnête, ils ont fait des choses qui ne l'étaient pas. Et pour faire ces choses il leur a fallu appeler à leur aide, honorer de leur faveur, introduire dans leur compagnie journalière, des hommes qui ne voulaient ni d'un but honnête, ni de moyens honnêtes, qui ne voulaient que la satisfaction grossière de leurs intérêts privés, à l'aide de la puissance qu'on leur confiait. . . . Je ne regarde pas ce fait comme un fait isolé; je le considère comme le symptôme d'un mal général, le trait le plus saillant de toute une politique: en marchant dans les voies que vous aviez choisies, vous aviez besoin de tels hommes. . . . . .

'Pour la première fois depuis quinze ans, j'éprouve une

certaine crainte pour l'avenir ; et ce qui me prouve que j'ai raison, c'est que cette impression ne m'est pas particulière : je crois que je puis en appeler à tous ceux qui m'écoutent, et que tous me répondront que dans les pays qu'ils représentent, une impression analogue subsiste ; qu'un certain malaise, une certaine crainte a envahi les esprits ; que, pour la première fois peut-être depuis seize ans, le sentiment, l'instinct de l'instabilité, ce sentiment précurseur des révolutions, qui souvent les annonce, qui quelquefois les fait naître, que ce sentiment existe à un dégré très grave dans le pays. . . . . Est-ce que vous ne ressentez-pas, par une sorte d'intuition instinctive qui ne peut pas s'analyser, mais qui est certaine, que le sol tremble de nouveau en Europe ? Est-ce que vous ne sentez-pas—que dirai-je ? un vent de révolutions qui est dans l'air ? Ce vent, on ne sait où il naît, d'où il vient, ni, croyez-le bien, qui il enlève. . . . . .

'Ma conviction profonde et arrêtée, c'est que les mœurs publiques se dégradent, c'est que la dégradation des mœurs publiques vous amènera, dans un temps court, prochain peut-être, à des révolutions nouvelles. . . . Est-ce que vous avez à l'heure où nous sommes, la certitude d'un lendemain ? Est-ce que vous savez ce qui peut arriver en France d'ici à un an, à un mois, à un jour peut-être ? Vous l'ignorez ; mais ce que vous savez, c'est que la tempête est à l'horizon, c'est qu'elle marche sur vous ; vous laisserez-vous prévenir par elle ?

'Messieurs, je vous supplie de ne pas le faire ; je ne vous le demande pas, je vous en supplie : je ne mettrais volontiers à genoux devant vous, tant je crois le danger réel et sérieux, tant je pense que le signaler n'est pas recourir à une vaine forme de rhetorique. Oui, le danger est grand ! conjurez-le quand il en est temps encore : corrigez le mal par des moyens efficaces, non en l'attaquant dans ses symptômes, mais en lui-même.

'On a parlé de changements dans la législation. Je suis très porté à croire que ces changements sont non seulement utiles, mais nécessaires : ainsi je crois à l'utilité de la réforme électorale, à l'urgence de la réforme parlementaire ; mais je ne suis pas assez insensé, messieurs, pour ne pas savoir que ce ne

sont pas les lois elles-mêmes qui font la destinée des peuples; non, ce n'est pas le mécanisme des lois qui produit les grands événements de ce monde: ce qui fait les événements, messieurs, c'est l'esprit même du gouvernement. Gardez les lois si vous voulez; quoique je pense que vous ayez grand tort de le faire, gardez-les; gardez-même les hommes, si cela vous fait plaisir, je n'y fais, pour mon compte, aucun obstacle; mais, pour Dieu, changez l'esprit du gouvernemeut, car, je vous le répète, cet esprit-là vous conduit à l'abîme.'

From the Manifesto of M. de Lamartine.

'Les traités de 1815 n'existent plus en droit aux yeux de la République Française; toutefois, les circonscriptions territoriales de ces traités sont un fait, qu'elle admet comme base et comme point de départ dans ses rapports avec les autres nations.

'Mais, si les traités de 1815 n'existent plus que comme fait à modifier d'un accord commun, et si la République déclare hautement qu'elle a pour droit et pour mission d'arriver régulièrement et pacifiquement à ces modifications, le bon sens, la modération, la conscience, la prudence de la République existent, et sont pour l'Europe une meilleure et plus honorable garantie que les lettres de ces traités, si souvent violés ou modifiés par elle.

'Attachez-vous, monsieur, à faire comprendre et admettre de bonne foi cette émancipation de la République des traités de 1815, et à montrer que cette franchise n'a rien d'inconciliable avec le repos de l'Europe.

'Ainsi, nous le disons hautement, si l'heure de la réconstruction de quelques nationalités opprimées en Europe ou ailleurs, nous paraissent avoir sonné dans les décrets de la Providence; si la Suisse, notre fidèle alliée depuis François I^er^, était contrainte ou menacée dans le mouvement de croissance qu'elle opère chez elle pour prêter une force de plus au faisceau des gouvernements démocratiques; si les états indépendants de l'Italie étaient envahis; si l'on imposait des limites ou des obstacles à leur transformations intérieures; si

on leur contestait à main armée le droit de s'allier entre eux pour consolider une patrie Italienne, la République Française se croirait en droit d'armer elle-même pour protéger ces mouvements légitimes de croissance et de la nationalité des peuples.'

From the Answer of M. de Lamartine to the Polish Refugees.

'La République n'est en guerre ouverte ni sourde avec aucune des nations, avec aucun des gouvernements existants, tant que ces nations et ces gouvernements ne se déclarent pas eux-mêmes en guerre avec elle. Elle ne fera donc, elle ne permettra volontairement aucun acte d'agression et de violence contre les nations Germaniques. . . . . Le Gouvernement Provisoire ne se laissera pas changer sa politique dans la main par une nation étrangère, quelque sympathique qu'elle soit à nos cœurs. Nous aimons la Pologne, nous aimons l'Italie, nous aimons tous les peuples opprimés ; mais nous aimons avant tout la France, et nous avons la responsabilité de ses destinées, et peut-être de celles de l'Europe, en ce moment. Cette responsabilité nous ne la remettrons à personne qu'à la nation elle-même. . . . La République ne doit pas et ne veut pas avoir des actes en contradiction avec ses paroles ; le respect de sa parole est à ce prix ; elle ne la décréditera jamais en y manquant. Qu'a-t-elle dit dans son manifeste aux puissances? Elle a dit, en pensant à vous : Le jour où il nous paraîtrait que l'heure providentielle aurait sonné pour la resurrection d'une nationalité injustement effacée de la carte, nous volerions à son secours. Mais nous nous sommes justement réservé ce qui appartient à la France seule, l'appréciation de l'heure, du moment, de la justice, de la cause, et des moyens par lesquels il nous conviendrait d'intervenir. Eh bien, ces moyens, jusqu'ici nous les avons choisis et résolus pacifiques.'

From the Answer of M. de Lamartine to the Irish Deputation.

'Quant à d'autres encouragements, il ne serait pas convenable à nous de vous les donner, à vous de les recevoir. Je

l'ai déjà dit à propos de la Suisse, à propos de l'Allemagne, à propos de la Belgique et de l'Italie. Je le répète à propos de toute nation qui a des débats intérieurs à vider avec elle-même ou avec son gouvernement. Quand on n'a pas son sang dans les affaires d'un peuple, il n'est pas permis d'y avoir son intervention ni sa main. Nous ne sommes d'aucun parti en Irlande ou ailleurs, que du parti de la justice, de la liberté, et du bonheur des peuples. Aucun autre rôle ne nous serait acceptable, en temps de paix, dans les intérêts et dans les passions des nations étrangères. La France veut se réserver libre pour tous ses droits.

'Nous sommes en paix, et nous désirons rester en bons rapports d'égalité, non avec telle ou telle partie de la Grande Bretagne, mais avec la Grande Bretagne tout entière. Nous croyons cette paix utile et honorable, non seulement pour la Grande Bretagne et la République Française, mais pour le genre humain. Nous ne ferons aucun acte, nous ne dirons aucune parole, nous n'adresserons aucune insinuation en contradiction avec les principes d'inviolabilité réciproque des peuples, que nous avons proclamés, et dont le Continent recueille déjà les fruits. La monarchie déchue avait des traités et des diplomates ; nous avons des peuples pour diplomates, et des sympathies pour traités. Nous serions insensés de changer une telle diplomatie au grand jour contre des alliances sourdes et partielles avec les partis même les plus légitimes dans les pays qui nous environnent. Nous n'avons qualité ni pour les juger, ni pour les préférer les uns aux autres. En nous déclarant amis de ceux-ci, nous nous déclarerions ennemis de ceux-là. Nous ne voulons être ennemis d'aucuns de vos compatriotes ; nous voulons faire tomber, au contraire, par la loyauté de la parole républicaine, les préventions et les préjugés qui existeraient entre nos voisins et nous.'

From the 'History of the Girondists.'

'Le partage égal des lumières, des facultés, et des dons de la nature est évidemment la tendance légitime du cœur humain. Les révélateurs, les poëtes, et les sages ont roulé

éternellement cette pensée dans leur âme, et l'ont perpetuellement montrée dans leur ciel, dans leurs rêves, ou dans leurs lois, comme la perspective de l'humanité. C'est donc un instinct de la justice dans l'homme. . . . Tout ce qui tend à constituer des inégalités de lumières, de rang, de conditions, de fortune, parmi les hommes, est impie. Tout ce qui tend à niveler graduellement ces inégalités, qui sont souvent des injustices, et à répartir le plus équitablement l'heritage commun entre tous les hommes, est divin. Toute politique peut être jugée à ce signe, comme tout arbre est jugé à ses fruits : l'idéal n'est que la vérité à distance.

'Mais plus un idéal est sublime, plus il est difficile à réaliser en institutions sur la terre. La difficulté jusqu'ici a été de concilier avec l'égalité des biens les inégalités de vertus, de facultés, et de travail, qui différencient les hommes entre eux. Entre l'homme actif et l'homme inerte, l'égalité des biens devient une injustice; car l'un crée, et l'autre dépense. Pour que cette communauté des biens soit juste, il faut supposer à tous les hommes la même conscience, la même application au travail, la même vertu. Cette supposition est une chimère. Or quel ordre social pourrait reposer solidement sur un tel mensonge? De deux choses l'une. Ou bien il faudrait que la société, partout présente et partout infaillible, pût contraindre chaque individu au même travail et à la même vertu; mais alors que devient la liberté? La société n'est plus qu'un universel esclavage. Ou bien il faudrait que la société distribuât de ses propres mains, tous les jours, à chacun selon ses œuvres, la part exactement proportionnée à l'œuvre et au service de chacun dans l'association générale; mais alors quel sera le juge?

'La sagesse humaine imparfaite a trouvé plus facile, plus sage, et plus juste de dire à l'homme : 'Sois toi-même ton propre juge, retribue-toi toi-même par la richesse ou par la misère.' La société a institué la propriété, proclamé la liberté du travail, et légalisé la concurrence.

'Mais la propriété instituée ne nourrit pas celui qui ne possède rien. Mais la liberté du travail ne donne pas les

mêmes éléments de travail à celui qui n'a que ses bras, et à celui qui possède des milliers d'arpents sur la surface du sol. Mais la concurrence n'est que le code de l'égoïsme, et la guerre à mort entre celui qui travaille et celui qui fait travailler, entre celui qui achète et celui qui vend, entre celui qui nage dans le superflu et celui qui a faim. Iniquité de toutes parts! Incorrigibles inégalités de la nature et de la loi! La sagesse du législateur paraît être de les pallier une à une, siècle par siècle, loi par loi. Celui qui veut tout corriger d'un coup, brise tout. Le possible est la condition de la misérable sagesse humaine. Sans prétendre résoudre par une seule solution des iniquités complexes, corriger sans cesse, améliorer toujours, c'est la justice d'êtres imparfaits comme nous. . . . . Le temps paraît être un élément de la vérité elle-même; demander la vérité définitive à un seul jour, c'est demander à la nature des choses plus qu'elle ne peut donner. L'impatience crée des illusions et des ruines au lieu de vérités. Les déceptions sont des vérités cueillies avant le temps. La vérité est évidemment la communauté chrétienne et philosophique des biens de la terre. Les déceptions, ce sont les violences et les systèmes par lesquels on a cru vainement pouvoir établir cette vérité et l'organiser jusqu'ici.'—*Lamartine, Histoire des Girondins*, livre 39, ad finem.

THE END.

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